# HUSBANDRY

*Spiritualized;*

OR, THE

## HEAVENLY USE OF EARTHLY THINGS.

AND

# NAVIGATION

*Spiritualized;*

OR

## A NEW COMPASS FOR SEAMEN.

TOGETHER WITH

## A SAINT INDEED,

*Or the Great Work of a Chriſtian opened and preſſed.*

## THE TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY.

AND

*A TOKEN FOR MOURNERS.*

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BY THE

*REV. MR. JOHN FLAVEL.*

Late Miniſter of the Goſpel, at Dartmouth, in Devon.

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# HUSBANDRY

## *SPIRITUALIZED:*

OR,

## THE HEAVENLY USE OF EARTHLY THINGS:

Confiſting of many pleaſant *obſervations*, pertinent *applications*, and ſerious *reflections*; and each chapter concluded with a *divine* and ſuitable *poem*. Directing *huſbandmen* to the moſt excellent improvements of their common employments. Whereunto are added, by way of *Appendix*, ſeveral choice *occaſional meditations*, upon *birds*, *beaſts*, *trees*, *flowers*, *rivers*, and ſeveral other objects; fitted for the help of ſuch as deſire to walk with God in all their ſolitudes, and receſſes from the world.

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## THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Worſhipful ROBERT SAVERY, and WILLIAM SAVERY, of *Slade*, Eſquires.

*Honoured Friends*,

IT hath been long ſince obſerved, that the world below is a glaſs to diſcover the world above; *Seculum eſt ſpeculum*: and although I am not of their opinion, that ſay, the Heathens may ſpell Chriſt out of the ſun, moon, and ſtars; yet this I know, that the irrational and inanimate, as well as rational creatures, have a language; and though not by articulate ſpeech, yet, in a metaphorical ſenſe, they preach unto man the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of God, Rom. i. 20. "There is (ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſalm xix. 3.) no ſpeech, nor language, "where their voice is not heard." Or (as Junius renders it) there is no ſpeech, nor words, yet without theſe, their voice is underſtood, and their line (i. e. ſaith Diodate) their writing in groſs and plain draughts, is gone out through all the earth.

As man is compounded of a fleſhly and ſpiritual ſubſtance, ſo God hath endowed the creatures with a ſpiritual, as well as fleſhly uſefulneſs; they have not only a natural uſe in alimental and phyſical reſpects, but alſo a ſpiritual uſe, as they bear the figures and ſimilitudes of many ſublime and heavenly myſteries. Believe me (ſaith contemplative Bernard) thou ſhalt find more in the woods, than in a corner; ſtones and trees will teach thee what thou ſhalt not hear from learned doctors. By a ſkilful and induſtrious improvement of the crea-

tures (ſaith Mr Baxter excellently) we might have a fuller taſte of Chriſt and heaven, in every bit of bread that we eat, and in every draught of beer that we drink, than moſt men have in the uſe of the ſacrament.

And as the creatures teach divine and excellent things, ſo they teach them in a perſpicuous and taking manner: *Duo illa nos maxime movent, ſimilitudo et exemplum*, ſaith the orator*. Theſe two things, ſimilitude and example, do eſpecially move us. Notions are more eaſily conveyed to the underſtanding, by being firſt clothed in ſome apt ſimilitude, and ſo repreſented to the ſenſe. And therefore Jeſus Chriſt the great Prophet, delighted much in teaching by parables; and the prophets were much in this way alſo, Hoſ. xii. 10. "I have "uſed ſimilitudes by the miniſtry of the prophets." Thoſe that can retain little of a ſermon, yet ordinarily retain an apt ſimilitude.

I confeſs it is an humbling conſideration, That man, who at firſt was led by the knowledge of God to the knowledge of the creature, muſt now by the creatures learn to know God. That the creatures, (as one ſaith) like Balaam's aſs, ſhould teach their maſter. But though this be the unhappineſs of poor man in his collapſed ſtate, yet it is now his wiſdom to improve ſuch helps; and whilſt others, by the abuſe of the creatures, are furthering their perdition, to be, by the ſpiritual improvement of them, promoting his own ſalvation.

It is an excellent art to diſcourſe with birds, beaſts, and fiſhes, about ſublime and ſpiritual ſubjects, and make them anſwer to your queſtions; and this may be done, Job xii. 7, 8. "Aſk now the "beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and "they ſhall tell thee; or ſpeak to the earth, and it ſhall teach thee, "and the fiſhes of the ſea ſhall declare unto thee." That is (ſaith neat and accurate † Caryl) the creatures teach us when we think of them: 'They teach us, though not formally, yet virtually; they an-'ſwer and reſolve the queſtion put to them, though not explicitly to 'the ear, yet convincingly to the conſcience. So then, we aſk the 'creatures, when we diligently conſider them, when we ſearch out 'the perfections and virtues that God hath put into, or ſtampt up-'on them. To ſet our mind thus upon the creature, is to diſcourſe 'with the creature; the queſtions which man aſks of a beaſt, are 'only his own meditations. Again, the creatures teach us, when 'we in meditation make our collections, and draw down a demon-'ſtration of the power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God in making 'them, or the frailty of man in needing them: ſuch concluſions and 'inferences are the teachings of the creatures.'

Common objects (ſaith ‡ another) may be improved two ways; viz. In an argumentative, and in a repreſentative way; by reaſoning from them, and by viewing the reſemblance that is betwixt them and ſpiritual matters.

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* Cicero. † Caryl. in loc. ‡ Dr Manton.

*Firſt*, In meditation argue thus, as in the preſent ca ſe and ſimil tude of the apoſtle. If an huſbandman upon the ordinary principles of reaſon can wait for the harveſt, ſhall not I wait for the coming of the Lord, the day of refreſhing? the corn is precious to him, and ſo is the coming of Chriſt to me. Shall he be ſo patient, and endure ſo much for a little corn? and ſhall not I for the kingdom of heaven? He is willing to ſtay till all cauſes have had their operations, till he hath received the former and the latter rain; and ſhall not I, till the Divine decrees be accompliſhed?

*Secondly*, In meditation, make the reſemblance, and diſcourſe thus within yourſelves: This is my ſeed-time, heaven is my harveſt; here I muſt labour and toil, and there reſt. I ſee the huſbandman's life is a great toil: no excellent thing can be obtained without labour, and an obſtinate patience. I ſee the ſeed muſt be hidden in the furrows, rotten and corrupted, e'er it can ſpring forth with any increaſe. Our hopes are hidden, light is ſown for the righteous; all our comforts are buried under the clods, and after all this there muſt be long waiting, we cannot ſow and reap in a day; effects cannot follow till all neceſſary cauſes have firſt wrought. It is not in the power of huſbandmen to ripen fruits at pleaſure, our times are in the hands of God, therefore it is good to wait; a long-ſuffering patience will reap the deſired fruit. Thus you have ſome hints of this heavenly art of improving the creatures.

The motives inducing me to this undertaking, were the Lord's owning with ſome ſucceſs, my labours of a like nature*, together with the deſire and inclination (ſtirred up in me, I hope, by the Spirit of the Lord) to devote my vacant hours to his ſervice in this kind. I conſidered, that if the Phariſees in a blind zeal to a faction, could compaſs ſea and land to proſelyte men to their party, though thereby they made them ſevenfold more the children of the devil than before; how much more was I obliged, by true love to God, and zeal to the everlaſting happineſs of ſouls, to uſe my utmoſt endeavours both with *ſeamen* and *huſbandmen*, to win them to Chriſt, and thereby make them more than ſeventy-ſeven fold happier than before? Not to mention other encouragements to this work, which I received from the earneſt deſires of ſome reverend and worthy brethren inviting thereunto; all which I hope the event will manifeſt to be a call from God to this work.

I confeſs I met with ſome diſcouragement in my firſt attempt, from my unacquaintedneſs with rural affairs; and becauſe I was to travel in a path (to me) untrodden; but having once engaged in it, thoſe diſcouragements were ſoon overcome: and being now brought to what you here ſee, I offer to your hands theſe firſt fruits of my ſpare hours.

I preſume you will account it no diſparagement, that I dedicate a

* Navigation Spiritualized.

book of huſbandry to gentlemen of your quality. This is *ſpiritual huſbandry*, which here is taught you; and yet I tell you, that great perſons have accounted that civil employment (which is much inferior to this) no diſparagement to them. "The king himſelf is ſerved "by the field," Eccleſ. v. 9. Or, as Montanus renders the Hebrew text, *Rex agro fit ſervus*; The king himſelf is a ſervant to the field. And of king Uzziah it is written, 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. "That he "loved huſbandry." And Amos vii. 1. we read of the king's *mowings*. Yea, Pliny hath obſerved, that corn was never ſo plentiful at Rome, as when the ſame men tilled the land that ruled the *commonwealth*. *Quaſi gauderet terra laureato vomere, ſcilicet et aratore triumphali;* as though the earth itſelf rejoiced in the laurelled plow-ſhare, and the triumphant plowman.

What pleaſure you will find in reading it I know not; but to me it hath been a pleaſant path from firſt to laſt; who yet have been at far-greater expence of time and pains in compiling it, than you can be in reading it. The huſbandman's work, you know, is no eaſy work, and the ſpiritualizing of it hath greater difficulties attending it; but yet the pleaſure hath abundantly recompenſed the pains. I have found Eraſmus's obſervation experimentally true; *Qui literis addicti ſumus, animi laſſitudinem a ſtudiis gravioribus contractam; ab iiſdem ſtudiis, ſed amœnioribus recreamus:* Thoſe that are addicted to ſtudy, (ſaith he) when they have wearied their ſpirits with ſtudy, can recreate them again with ſtudy, by making a diverſion from that which is ſevere and knotty, to ſome more facile and pleaſant ſubject.

But to hear that God hath uſed and honoured theſe papers to the good of any ſoul, will yield me the higheſt content and ſatisfaction imaginable.

May you but learn that leſſon, which is the general ſcope and deſign of this book, *viz.* How to walk with God from day to day, and make the ſeveral objects you behold, *ſcalæ et alæ*, wings and ladders to mount your ſouls nearer to him, who is the centre of all bleſſed ſpirits. How much will it comfort me, and confirm my hope, that it was the call of God indeed, which put me upon theſe endeavours!

O Sirs! What an excellent thing would it be for you, to make ſuch holy improvements of all theſe earthly objects which daily occur to your ſenſes, and cauſe them to proclaim and preach to you divine and heavenly myſteries; whilſt others make them groan, by abuſing them to ſin, and ſubjecting them to their luſts. A man may be caſt into ſuch a condition, wherein he cannot enjoy the bleſſing and benefit of a pious and powerful miniſtry; but you cannot (ordinarily) fall into ſuch a condition, wherein any thing (excepting a bad heart) can deprive you of the benefits and comforts of thoſe excellent ſermons, and divinity lectures, which the creatures here offer to preach and read to you.

Content not yourſelves, I beſeech you, with that natural ſweetneſs the creatures afford; for thereof the beaſts are capable, as much, if

not more, than you; but uſe them to thoſe ſpiritual ends you are here directed, and they will yield you a ſweetneſs far tranſcending that natural ſweetneſs you ever reliſhed in them; and indeed, you never uſe the creatures as their *Lord's*, till you come to ſee *your Lord* in and by them. I confeſs the diſcoveries of God in the word are far more excellent, clear, and powerful; "He hath mag-"nified his word above all his name." And therein are the unſearchable *riches of Chriſt*, or rich diſcoveries of that grace that hath no footſteps in nature, as the apoſtle's expreſſion ſignifies, Eph. iii. 8.

And if that which might be known of God by the creatures, leave men without excuſe, as it is manifeſt, Rom. i. 20. how inexcuſable then will thoſe be, who have received not only the teachings of the creature, but alſo the grace of the goſpel in vain! "How "ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?" They that are careleſs in the day of grace, ſhall be ſpeechleſs in the day of judgment.

I am ſenſible of many defects in theſe papers, (as well as in myſelf.) They have doubtleſs, a taſte of the diſtractions of the times wherein they were written; nor was I willing to keep them ſo long under hand as the accurateneſs and exactneſs with which ſuch a ſubject ought to have been handled, did require. Had I deſigned my own credit, I ſhould have obſerved that counſel, *Nonumque prematur in annum*, i. e. To have kept it much longer under the file, before I had expoſed it to public view; but I rather inclined to Solomon's counſel, "Whatever thy hand "finds out to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no wiſdom, "nor knowledge, nor device in the grave, whither thou art going," Eccl. ix. 10.

I apprehend a neceſſity of ſome ſuch means to be uſed for the inſtruction and conviction of country people; who either are not capable of underſtanding truth in another dialect, or at leaſt are leſs affected with it. The propoſition in every chapter conſiſts of an obſervation in huſbandry; wherein, if I have failed in uſing any improper expreſſion, your candour will cover it, and impute it to my unacquaintedneſs in rural affairs:

———*In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt.*

The reddition or application, you will find, I hope, both pertinent and cloſe. The reflections ſerious, and ſuch as (I hope) your conſciences will faithfully improve. I have ſhut up every chapter with a *Poem*, an innocent bait to catch the reader's ſoul.

That of *Herbert* is experimentally true:

A verſe may find him that a ſermon flies,
And turn delight into a ſacrifice.

I ſhould never have been perſuaded (eſpecially in this ſcribling age, wherein we may complain with the poet,

*Scribimus indocti, doctique poemata paſſim)*

to have ſet my dull fancy upon the rack to extort a poem to entertain my reader; for I cannot ſay with Ovid, *Sponte ſua carmen*, &c. but that I have been informed, that many ſeamen, induced by the pleaſure of a verſe, have taken much pains to learn the poems in their compaſs by heart; and I hope both the children at home, and the ſervants in the fields, will learn to exerciſe themſelves this way alſo. O, how much better will it be ſo to do, than to ſtuff their memories with obſcene ballads, and filthy ſongs, which corrupt their minds, and diſpoſe them to much wickedneſs, by irritating their natural corruption! But theſe are purer flames, you will find nothing here of ſuch a tendency.

'Tis guilt, not poetry, to be like thoſe,
Whoſe wit in verſe is downright ſin in proſe.
Whoſe ſtudies are profaneneſs, as if then
They only were good poets, when bad men.

D. DIGS.

I ſhall add no more, but to beg that God who inſtructeth the huſbandman in his civil calling, to teach him wiſdom ſpiritually to improve it, particularly, that you may reap a crop of much ſpiritual benefit, from that ſeed which is here ſown by the hand of the Lord's unprofitable ſervant, and in him,

*Your very affectionate*

*Friend and Servant,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

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## To the CHRISTIAN READER.

THERE are three things wherein (as it hath been ſaid long before my day) the exerciſe of godlineſs doth chiefly conſiſt: Prayer, temptation, meditation: Meditation is the ſubject of the following manual. The object of meditation is twofold. *Firſt*, The word. *Secondly*, The works of God. The works of God are twofold. *Firſt*, Internal. *Secondly*, External. The External works of God are twofold. *Firſt*, Of creation, *Secondly*, Of providence. The works of providence are likewiſe twofold. *Firſt*, In things civil, the Lord ordering and over-ruling all the affairs and motions of ſingle perſons, families, and nations, in a ſubſerviency to his own moſt holy ends, deſigns, and purpoſes. *Secondly*, In things natural, the Lord inſtructing the huſbandman to diſcretion, and teaching him how to dreſs and till the earth, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater; as alſo how to breed up and manage the beaſts of the field, both greater and leſſer cattle, for the uſe and ſervice of man.

Meditation upon this lower part of the works of God, and his wonderful providences about them, may raiſe our ſouls very high;

and while we wiſely conſider theſe natural things, we may grow more and more wiſe, in and for ſpirituals and eternals.

The worthy and ingenious Author of the enſuing diſcourſe hath ſupplied us with an excellent help, for the ſpiritualizing of the providential works of God in natural things, by godly meditations; we chiefly want the help of the Holy Spirit (without which all other helps and helpers are altogether inſufficient) to frame and wind up our hearts for this both profitable and delightful duty; yet the help which the Lord is pleaſed to give us for our direction in it, by the miniſtry of man, is not only not to be refuſed, but thankfully received and improved; and all little enough to bring our minds to, or keep them at this work: The beſt of ſaints, on this ſide heaven, have, though they are not earthly-minded only, much earth in their minds; which like a heavy clog at their heels, or a weight at their hearts, preſſeth them down when they would make an eſſay to mount upward in meditation. We find it no eaſy matter to keep off earthly thoughts, when we are moſt ſeriouſly engaged in heavenly work; how hard is it then to get in, and be fixed upon heavenly thoughts, while we are engaged about earthly work; yea, are (for ſo is the huſbandman) working the very earth, and raking in the bowels of it? It is a great part of our holineſs to be ſpiritually-minded, while we are converſing with God through Jeſus Chriſt in ſpiritual duties; but to be ſpiritually minded, and to mind ſpiritual things, when we are converſing with the clods of the earth, and the furrows of the field; when we have to do with corn and graſs, with trees and plants, with ſheep and oxen; when we behold the birds and fowls of the air, the worms, and all that creep upon the ground; then, I ſay, to be ſpiritually-minded, and thence to have our thoughts aſcending, and ſoaring up to God, in heart-affecting and quickening contemplations, witneſſeth an high degree of holineſs, and of gracious attainments. To make a ladder out of the earthly materials, for the raiſing of ourſelves in ſpirit up to heaven, is the *art of arts*. Holy and happy indeed are they who, being taught of God, have learned this art, and live in daily practice of it. Earthly objects uſually hinder us in our way, ſometimes turn us quite out of our way to heaven. Many plow and ſow, dig and delve the earth, till their hearts become as earthly as the earth itſelf: Many deal about the beaſts of the field, till themſelves become even brutiſh. Is it not then a bleſſed deſign which this Author aims and drives at, ſo to ſpiritualize all ſorts, or the whole compaſs of earthly huſbandry, that all ſorts of huſbandmen may become ſpiritual and heavenly? It ſeems to be a token of good, that God hath an intendment of ſome ſpecial good to the ſouls of ſuch as are by profeſſion proper huſbandmen, ſeeing he hath lately put it into the hearts of two faithful * miniſters (who with all of that profeſſion, are huſbandmen in a figure) to undertake, though in a different

* Mr Richard Steel, and this Author.

way, this ſubject, and to publiſh their labours in print, that they may be of uſe, not only for the preſent age, but for poſterity.

And that the huſbandman may be pleaſed as well as profited, in peruſing the labours of this author; he hath, with ſingular aptneſs and acuteneſs, contrived and contracted the ſum and ſcope of every chapter into an elegant diſtich, or pair of verſes, placed at the head of it, and concluded it with a choice melodious poem, ſuitable to, and dilating upon the whole matter of it. Theſe the huſbandman, who can but read, may quickly learn and ſing for his ſolace, inſtead of thoſe vain ballads and corrupting rhymes, which many of that rank are apt to buy, and ſolace themſelves withal, without any benefit, yea, much to their hurt, making their hearts more corrupt, carnal, and vain thereby.

Let me add one word more to the reader. This book of Huſbandry Spiritualized, is not calculated only for the common huſbandman; perſons of any calling, or condition, may find the author working out ſuch ſearching reflections and ſtrong convictions, from almoſt every part and particular of the huſbandman's work, as may prove, if faithfully improved, very uſeful to them; to ſome for their awakening, to conſider the ſtate of their ſouls, whether in grace, or in nature; to others for their inſtruction, conſolation, and encouragement in the ways of grace, as alſo for their proficiency and growth in thoſe ways. That the bleſſing of the Lord, and the breathings of his good Spirit may go out with it, for all thoſe gracious purpoſes, is the heart's deſire and prayer of him, who is,

CHRISTIAN READER,

*A ſincere well-wiſher to thy precious and immortal ſoul,*

JOSEPH CARYL.

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*To his Reverend and Learned Friend,* Mr JOHN FLAVEL, *on his Spiritual Navigation and Huſbandry.*

LETTERS of mark to his dear ſervant given,
By him that ſifts the ruffling winds of heaven:
To fight and take all ſuch as would not deign
T' acknowledge him the ſea's great Sovereign.
He launch'd his little *pinace*, and began
T' attack the vaſſals of *Leviathan*.
Auſpicious gales ſwelling his winged ſails,
Searches all creeks, and every bark he hails;
That ſcarce a ſhip our Weſtern coaſt afford,
Which his brave *pinace* has not laid aboard.

And what among our riddles ſome might count,
Was ſeen at once at Berwick, and the *Mount*.
Yea, in more *ports* hath in one *luſtre* been,
Than Hawkins, Drake, or Cavendiſh have ſeen.
And prizes of more worth brought home again,
Than all the *plate-fleets* of the Kings of Spain.
But that which makes the wonder ſwell the more,
Thoſe whom he took were *beggars* all before.
But reſts he here? No, no, our friend doth know,
*'Tis good to have two ſtrings unto his bow:*
Our rare Amphibion loves not to be pent
Within the bounds of one poor element.
Beſides, the learned author underſtood,
*That of an idle hand there comes no good.*
The law to him no *pulpit* doth allow,
And now he cannot *preach*, he means to *plow*,
Though preaching were a crime, yet he foreſaw
Againſt the plowman there could be no law.
Nor ſtays he on reſolves, but out-of-hand
He yokes his teem, plows up the ſtubborn land;
Sows it with precious ſeed, harrows again
The tougher clods, takes pleaſure in his pain.
Whilſt, Orpheus-like, (which doth his art advance)
Rocks, fields, and woods, *after his pipe do dance.*
Induſtrious ſpirit, to what a rich account
With thy bleſt Lord, with all theſe labours mount?
That every nerve of thy beſt ſoul doſt ply,
To further heaven's *ſpiritual huſbandry.*
This kind of tillage which thou teacheſt us,
Was never dreamt of by Triptolemus.
Go, reader, turn the leaves; and me allow
To pray (whilſt at work) *God ſpeed the plow.*

NICHOLAS WATTS.

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*In Authoris Opera.*

LET Paracelſus and Van Helmont's name,
No more ride triumph on the wings of fame.
Lo, here's a *chymiſt*, whoſe diviner ſkill
Doth *hallowed* from unhallowed things diſtil.
Spiritualizeth ſea-affairs; again,
Makes the rude ground turn tutor unto men.
Shews *Mariners*, as by a compaſs, how
They may unto the *port* of glory row.

Teacheth the *plowmen*, from their work, to know
What duties unto God and man they owe.
Rare artiſt! who, when many tongues are mute,
Mak'ſt things that are inanimate confute
The age's ſins; by preaching unto eyes,
Truths which in other modes their ears deſpiſe.
Proſper his pious labours, Lord! howe'er
Do not forget to crown the labourer.

*Sic raptim canit,*

DAN. CONDY.

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*To his Reverend and Invaluable Friend, Mr* J. F. *upon his* Huſbandry Spiritualized.

INGENIOUS Sir, what do I ſee? what now!
Are you come from the pulpit to the plow?
If ſo, then pardon me, if I profeſs,
The plow deſerves to be ſent to the preſs.
'Tis not long ſince you went to ſea, they ſay,
Compos'd a compaſs which directs the way,
And ſteers the courſe to heaven; O bleſt art!
And bravely done that you did that impart
To us, who take it kindly at your hand,
And bleſs the Lord that you are come to land,
To be an huſbandman, wherein your ſkill,
With admiration doth your readers fill.
One grain will yield increaſe, 'tis ten times ten,
When the earth's manur'd by ſuch huſbandmen.
We may expect rich harveſts, and full crops,
When heavenly dew deſcendeth in ſuch drops
Of ſpiritual rain, to water every field,
That it full heaps of grace to God may yield.
I muſt adore the wiſdom of that God
That makes men wiſe, who, even from a clod
of earth, can raiſe ſuch heavenly meditation
Unto a pitch of higheſt elevation.
Beſides, I mark the goodneſs of the Lord,
Performing unto us his faithful word,
That all ſhould work for good unto the ſaints,
Which, in ſome meaſure, leſſens our complaints.
For though our pulpit-mercies be grown leſs,
We have ſome gracious helps yet from the preſs.
And herein all the world may plainly ſee,
That faithful ſervants will not idle be.

We have ſome bricks, although the ſtraw be gone,
The church, at laſt, ſhall be of poliſh'd ſtone.
Whatever men or devils act or ſay,
Sion, at laſt, will have a glorious day.
The wretched muck-worm, that from morn to night
Labours, as if 'twere for an heav'nly weight;
And, when he hath got all he can, the moſt
Amounts to little more than a poor cruſt,
To feed his tir'd carcaſe: If himſelf
Have, by his carking, got a little pelf,
Leave it he muſt, to one he knows not whom,
And then muſt come to an eternal doom;
And hear his poor neglected, wretched ſoul
Tell him at laſt that he hath play'd the fool.
But here he's taught, how he, before he die,
May lay up treaſure for eternity;
Wherein he may be rich, yea, much, much more,
Than they that do poſſeſs whole mines of ore.
When earth's more worth than heav'n, and gold than grace,
Then let the worldling run his brutiſh race;
But not before, unleſs he do intend
To meet with ſoul-deſtruction in the end.
But I muſt leave him, and return again
To gratulate the author for his pain.
And here I can't forbear to bid my pen
To tell the world of all the huſbandmen,
That e'er I met, he, he hath hit the vein
To recompenſe the labourer's hard pain,
And taught him how to get the greateſt gain.
Wherein he treads a path not trode before;
By which, indeed, his ſkill appears the more.
I might *encomiums* give him, great and true,
And yet come very ſhort of what's his due;
But I muſt not walk in forbidden ways,
For thereby I am ſure, I ſhould diſpleaſe
His pious mind, who doth, and freely can
Give all the praiſe to the great huſbandman;
Who will his graces in his ſervants own,
But doth expect himſelf to wear the crown.
Farewel, dear Sir, I take my leave, and now,
Will ſay no more than this, *God ſpeed the plow.*

EDWARD JEFFERY.

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## The EPISTLE, to the intelligent Country READER.

THOU haſt here the fruit of ſome of my ſpare hours, which were thus employed, when, by a ſad providence, I was thruſt

from the ſociety of many dear friends, into a ſolitary country-dwelling. I hope none will envy me theſe innocent delights, which I made out of my lonely walks, whereby the Lord ſweetened my ſolitudes there. It is like thou wilt find ſome paſſages here, that are harmleſly pleaſant; yet, I aſſure thee, I know of none that the moſt *Cynical Reader* can cenſure, as ſinfully light and vain. I muſt acknowledge, to the praiſe of God, that I have found ſome of thoſe (which, poſſibly, ſome of my readers will call the ſlighteſt and moſt trifling ſubjects of meditation) to be the ordinances for inſtruction, caution, and conſolation to my own ſoul; yea, ſuch a degree of comfort, I do profeſs to have found by theſe things, as hath much endeared the country-life to me, and made me much better to underſtand that ſaying of Horace, than when I learned it at ſchool,

*Noviſtine locum potiorem rure beato?*
*Eſt ubi plus tepeant hyems? Ubi gratior aura?*
*O rus, quando ego te adſpiciam? Quandoque licebit*
*Nunc veterum libris, nunc ſomno, et inertibus horis*
*Ducere ſolicitæ jucunda oblivio vitæ. (i. e.)*

What life can with the country life compare?
Where breathes the pureſt, and moſt healthful air.
Where, undiſturb'd, my ſtudy I purſue,
And, when I ſleep, bid all my cares adieu. *Hor. Sat. 6.*

And what I have found ſo beneficial to myſelf, I cannot but think may be ſo to others. I aſſure thee, reader, I am not fond of any of theſe conceptions; and yet I think I may modeſtly enough ſay, That the emptieſt leaf of this book may ſerve for more, and better uſes, than a mere diverſion, when thou canſt find leiſure to peruſe it. I know, your troubles and cares are many; and though your condition of life hath many innocent comforts and outward mercies to ſweeten it, yet I believe moſt of you have found that ancient ſaying of Anacreon experimentally true: Εχει το πικρον της γεωργιας γλυκυ.

'Some bitter troubles countrymen do meet,
'Wherewith the Lord doth intermix their ſweet.'

The *cares* of your *minds* are commonly no leſs than the *pains* of your *bodies*; it concerns you, therefore, to *ſweeten* what you cannot *avoid*; and I know no better way for that, than what is here directed to. O friends! what advantages have you for a ſpiritual life? Why may you not have two harveſts every year? One for your ſouls, another for your bodies; if you could thus learn to huſband your huſbandry. Methinks ſpiritual meditations do even put themſelves upon you. Huſbandmen of old were generally preſumed to be honeſt and good men; what elſe means that ſaying of Menander, Αγροικος ειναι προσποιη πονηρος ων.

'Profeſs thyſelf an huſbandman,
'And wicked too! believe't that can!'

What you are, godly or wicked, is not for me (that am a ſtranger to moſt of you) to determine: but if you are not godly, it is my de-

ſire and deſign to make you ſo: and I could not think on a more probable mean to accompliſh this honeſt deſign, than what I have here uſed. Methinks it ſhould be a pleaſure to you, when you come weary out of the fields from plow, or any other labour to ſit down in the evening, and read that chapter which concerns that particular buſineſs, and refreſh your ſouls, even from that which hath wearied your bodies. Were your hearts but heavenly, and more time allowed for ſpiritual huſbandry, your inward comforts would be much more, and your outward gains not a jot leſs; for if the ſucceſs of all your civil labours and employments depend upon the pleaſure and will of God, (as all that are not atheiſt's do acknowledge) then, certainly, your buſineſs can ſucceed never the worſe for your endeavours to pleaſe him, upon whoſe pleaſure it ſo entirely depends. I have many times lifted up my heart to heaven, whilſt theſe papers were under my hand, for a ſpecial bleſſing to accompany them, when they ſhould be in yours. If the Lord accompliſh my deſires by them upon your ſouls you ſhall enjoy two heavens, one here, and another hereafter. Would not that be ſweet? The hiſtorian tells us, that Altitius Serarius was ſowing corn in the field, when Q. Cincinnatus came to him bare-headed with letters from the ſenate, ſignifying, that he was choſen to the dictatorſhip. I hope the Lord will ſo bleſs and ſucceed theſe labours, that many of you will be called from holding the *plow* on earth, to wear the *crown* of glory in heaven; which is the ſincere deſire of

*Your hearty well-wiſher,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

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## *The AUTHOR to the READER,*

COME you, whoſe liſt'ning ears do even itch
To hear the way preſcrib'd of growing rich;
I'll ſhew you how to make your tenements
Ten thouſand times more worth, and yet your rents
Not rais'd a farthing; here my reader ſees
A way to make his dead and barren trees
Yield precious fruit; his ſheep, though ne'er ſo bad,
Bear golden fleeces, ſuch ne'er Jaſon had:
In every thing your gain ſhall more than double,
And all this bad with far leſs toil and trouble.
Methinks I hear thee ſay, This cannot be,
I'll ne'er believe it. Well, read on and ſee.
Reader, hadſt thou but ſenſes exercis'd
To judge aright; were ſpiritual things but priz'd
At their juſt value, thou wouldſt quickly ſay,

'Tis ſo indeed; thou wouldſt not go thy way
Like one that's diſappointed, and ſo fling
The book aſide. *I thought 't was ſome ſuch thing.*
Time was when country Chriſtians did afford
More hours and pains about God's holy word:
Witneſs the man who did moſt gladly pay
For ſome few leaves his whole cart-load of hay.
And time ſhall be, when heavenly truth that warms
The heart, ſhall be preferr'd before your farms;
When holineſs, as ſacred ſcripture tells,
Shall be engraven on the horſes bells.
Lord, haſten on thoſe much deſired times,
And, to that purpoſe, bleſs thoſe rural rhymes.

## THE PROEM.

1 COR. iii. 9. *Ye are God's Huſbandry.*

THE ſcope and deſign of the following chapters, being the ſpiritual improvement of huſbandry, it will be neceſſary, by way of *proem*, to acquaint the reader with the foundation, and general rules of this art in the ſcriptures, thereby to procure greater reſpect unto, and prevent prejudices againſt compoſures of this kind.

To this end, I ſhall entertain the reader a little while upon what this ſcripture affords, which will give a fair introduction to the following diſcourſe.

The apoſtle's ſcope in the context being to check and repreſs the vain glory and emulation of the Corinthians, who, inſtead of thankfulneſs for, and an humble and diligent improvement of the excellent bleſſings of the miniſtry, turned all into vain oſtentation and emulation, one preferring Paul, and another Apollos; in the mean time depriving themſelves of the choice bleſſings they might have received from them both.

To cure this growing miſchief in the churches, he checks their vanity, and diſcovers the evil of ſuch practices by ſeveral arguments, amongſt which this is one,

*Ye are God's Huſbandry*, q. d.

What are ye, but a field or plot of ground, to be manured and cultivated for God? And what are Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, but ſo many workmen and labourers, employed by God, the great Huſbandman, to plant and water you all?

If, then, you ſhall glory in ſome, and deſpiſe others, you take the ready way to deprive yourſelves of the benefits and mercies you might receive from the joint miniſtry of them all. God hath uſed me to plant you, and Apollos to water you; you are obliged to bleſs him for

the miuiſtry of both, and it will be your ſin if you deſpiſe either. If the workmen be diſcouraged in their labours, it is the field that loſes and ſuffers by it; ſo the words are a ſimilitude, ſerving to illuſtrate the relation,

1. Which the churches have to God.
2. Which God's miniſters have to the churches.

1. The relation betwixt God and them is like that of an huſbandman to his ground or tillage. The Greek word ſignifies God's **arable*, or that plot of ground which God manures by the miniſtry of paſtors and teachers.

2. It ſerves to illuſtrate the relation that the miniſters of Chriſt ſuſtain to the churches, which is like that of the huſbandman's ſervants to him and his fields; which excellent notion carries in it the perpetual neceſſity of a goſpel miniſtry. (For what fruit can be expected, where there are none to till the ground?) As alſo the diligence, accountableneſs, and rewards which theſe labourers are to give to, and receive from God, the great Huſbandman. All runs into this,

That the life and employment of an huſbandman, excellently ſhadows forth the relation betwixt God and his church, and the relative duties betwixt its miniſters and members.

Or more briefly thus:

The church is God's huſbandry, about which his miniſters are employed.

I ſhall not here obſerve my uſual method, (intending no more but a preface to the following diſcourſe) but only open the particulars wherein the reſemblance conſiſts; and then draw ſome Corollaries from the whole. The firſt I ſhall diſpatch in theſe twenty particulars following:

1. *Prop.* The huſbandman purchaſes his fields, and gives a valuable conſideration for them, Jer. xxxii. 9, 10.

*Reddit.* So hath God purchaſed his church with a full valuable price, even the precious blood of his own Son, Acts xx. 28. "Feed "the church of God which he hath purchaſed, or acquired with his "own blood." O dear-bought inheritance! how much doth this beſpeak its worth! Or rather, the high eſteem God hath of it, to pay down blood, and ſuch blood for it; never was any inheritance bought at ſuch a rate: every particular elect perſon, and none but ſuch are comprehended in this purchaſe; the reſt ſtill remain in the devil's right. Sin made a forfeiture of all to juſtice, upon which Satan entered, and took poſſeſſion, and, as the ſtrong man armed, ſtill keeps it in them, Luke xi. 21. but upon payment of this ſum to juſtice, the elect (who only are intended in this purchaſe) paſs over into God's right and property, and now are neither Satan's, Acts xxvi. 18.

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* The faithful (or believers) are called God's huſbandry, (γεωργιον, *georgeon*) becauſe God cultivates them as land by means of ſpiritual teachers (or paſtors) *Rav.*

nor their own, 1 Cor. vi. 19. but the *Lord's peculiar*, 1 Pet. ii. 6. And to ſhew how much they are his own, you have two *poſſeſſives* in one verſe. Cant. viii, 12. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before "me, mine, which is mine."

2 *Prop.* Huſbandmen divide and ſeparate their own lands from other men's, they have their land-marks and boundaries, by which property is preſerved, Deut. xxvii. 17. Prov. xxii. 28.

*Reddit.* So are the people of God wonderfully ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from all the people of the earth. Pſal. iv. 3. "The Lord "hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf. And the Lord knoweth "who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. It is a ſpecial act of grace, to be incloſed by God out of the waſte howling wilderneſs of the world, Deut. xxxiii. 16. This did God *intentionally*, in the decree before the world was; which decree is executed in their ſanctification and adoption.

3. *Prop.* Corn-fields are carefully fenced by the huſbandman with hedges and ditches, to preſerve their fruits from beaſts that would otherwiſe over-run and deſtroy them——*Non minor eſt virtus quam quærere parta tueri.* It is as good huſbandry to keep what we have, as to acquire more than we had.

*Reddit.* "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he fenced it," Iſa. v. 1, 2. No inheritance is better defended and ſecured, than the Lord's inheritance, Pſal. cxxv. 2. "As the "mountains are round about Jeruſalem, ſo the Lord is round about "his people." So careful is he for their ſafety "that he createth "upon every dwelling-place of mount Sion, and upon her aſſem-"blies, a cloud and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire "by night: for upon all the glory ſhall be a defence," Iſa. iv. 5. Not a particular ſaint, but is hedged about and incloſed in arms of power and love, Job i. 10. "Thou haſt made a hedge about him," The devil fain would, but by his own confeſſion could not break over the hedge to touch Job, till God's permiſſion made a gap for him: yea, he not only made an hedge, but a wall about them, and that of fire, Zech. ii. 5. Sets a guard of angels "to encamp round "about them that fear him," Pſal. xxxiv. 7. And will not truſt them with a ſingle guard of angels neither, though their power be great, and love to the ſaints as great; but watches over them himſelf alſo, Iſa. xxvii. 2, 3. "Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine, "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; leſt any "hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

4. *Prop.* Huſbandmen carry out their compoſt, to fertilize their arable ground, they dung it, dreſs it, and keep it in heart; and in theſe weſtern parts are at great charges to bring lime, and ſalt-water-ſand to quicken their thin and cold ſoil.

*Reddit.* "Lord, let it alone this year alſo, till I ſhall dig about it, "and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well, if not, cut it down," Luke xiii. 8. O the rich dreſſing which God beſtows upon his churches!

they are coſtly fields indeed, dreſs'd and fertilized, not only by precious ordinances and providences, but alſo by the ſweat, yea, blood of the diſpenſers of them. "You Londoners (ſaith Mr Lockier *in* "*Coloſ.* p. 552.) are trees watered choicely indeed; it is ſtoried of "the palm-tree, that at its firſt tranſplanting into Italy, it was wa-"tered with wine. I cannot ſay (ſaith he) that you have been ſo "watered by me. I dare not; but this I can humbly and truly ſay, "that if our choiceſt ſtrength and ſpirits may be named inſtead of "water, wine; or if the bleſſing which hath gone along with theſe "waters, at any time, hath turned them into wine, in vigour upon "your ſouls, then hath God by me, watered your roots with wine.'

5. *Prop.* The huſbandman builds his houſe, where he makes his purchaſe, dwells upon his land, and frequently viſits it; he knows that ſuch as dwell far from their *lands*, are not far from *loſs*.

*Reddit.* So doth God; wherever he plants a church, there doth he fix his habitation, intending there to dwell, Pſalm xlvi. 5. "God "is in the midſt of her," ſhe ſhall not be moved. Thus God came to dwell upon his own fee and inheritance, in Judea, Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. "And I will ſet my tabernacle amongſt you, and will be your "God, and ye ſhall be my people." Which promiſe is again renewed to his churches of the New Teſtament, 2 Cor. vi. 16. And when the churches ſhall be in their greateſt flouriſh and purity, then ſhall there be the fulleſt and moſt glorious manifeſtation of the divine preſence among them, Rev. xxi. 3. "And I heard a great voice out "of heaven, ſaying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and "he will dwell with them, and be their God." Hence the aſſemblies are called, the places of his feet——And there they "behold "the beauty of the Lord," Pſalm xxvii.

6. *Prop.* Huſbandmen grudge not at the coſt they are at for their tillage; but as they lay out vaſt ſums upon it, ſo they do it cheerfully.

*Reddit.* "And now, O inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and men of Ju-"dah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard; what could "have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? And as he beſtows upon his heritage the choiceſt mercies, ſo he doth it with the greateſt cheerfulneſs; for he ſaith, Jer. xxxii. 41. "I "will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in "this land aſſuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole "ſoul." It is not the giving out of mercy (ſaith one) that grieveth God, but the recoiling of his mercy back again upon him by the creature's ingratitude.

7. *Prop.* When huſbandmen have been at coſt and pains about their huſbandry, they expect fruit from it, anſwerable to their pains and expences about it: "Behold (ſaid James) the huſbandman waiteth "for the precious fruits of the earth," Jam. v. 7.

*Reddit.* "And he looked that it ſhould bring forth fruit," Iſa. v.

2. This heavenly Huſbandman waits for the fruits of his fields alſo; never did any huſbandman long for the deſired harveſt, more than God doth for the fruits of holineſs from his ſaints: Great are the expectations of God from his people: "And when the time of the fruit "drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the huſbandmen, that they might "receive the fruits of it."

3. *Prop.* Huſbandmen are much delighted, to ſee the ſucceſs of their labours; it comforts them over all their hard pains, and many weary days to ſee a good increaſe.

*Reddit.* Much more is God delighted in beholding the flouriſhing graces of his people; it pleaſes him to ſee his plants laden with fruit, and his valleys ſing with corn, Cant. vi. 2. "My beloved is gone "down to the garden, into his beds of ſpices, to feed in the gardens, "and to gather lilies." Theſe beds of ſpices (ſay * expoſitors) are the particular churches, the companies of believers; he goes to feed in theſe gardens, like as men go to their gardens to make merry, or to gather fruit, Cant. iv. 16. "He eats his pleaſant fruit," viz. His people's holy performances, ſweeter to him than any *ambroſia*; thus he feeds in the gardens, and he gathers lilies when he tranſlates good ſouls into his kingdom above; "For the Lord taketh pleaſure "in his ſaints, and will beautify the meek with ſalvation."

9. *Prop.* The huſbandman is exceedingly grieved when he ſees the hopes of a good crop diſappointed, and his fields prove barren, or blaſted.

*Reddit.* So the Lord expreſſes his grief for, and anger againſt his people, when they bring forth no fruits, or wild fruits, worſe than none, Hoſea ix. 16. "Ephraim is ſmitten, their root is dried up." Chriſt was exceedingly diſpleaſed with the fig-tree, and curſed it for its barrenneſs; it grieves him to the heart when his ſervants return to him with ſuch complaints as theſe, "We have laboured in "vain, we have ſpent our ſtrength for nought."

10. *Prop.* Huſbandmen employ many labourers to work in their fields, there is need of many hands for ſuch a multiplicity of buſineſs.

*Reddit.* God hath diverſity of workmen alſo in the churches whom he ſends forth to labour in his ſpiritual fields, Eph. iv. 12. "He gave "ſome apoſtles, ſome prophets, and ſome evangeliſts, and ſome "paſtors and teachers, for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work "of the miniſtry," Amos iii. 7. I have ſent [*my ſervants*] *the prophets.* It is uſual with the apoſtles to place this title of a ſervant among their honourary titles, though a profane mouth once called it, *probroſum artificium*, a ſordid artifice. Chriſt hath ſtampt a great deal of dignity upon his miniſters, in retaining them for the neareſt ſervice to himſelf, 1 Cor. iv. 1. "Let a man ſo account of us, as the miniſters of

* Chriſt is fed when he ſees the graces of his people; he gathers lilies when he tranſlates any good ſoul out of this life. *Trop. on the place.*

" Chriſt;" they are workers together with God: The huſbandman works in the field among his labourers, and the great God diſdaineth not to work in, and with his poor ſervants, in the work of the miniſtry.

11. *Prop.* The work about which huſbandmen employ their ſervants in the field, is toilſome and ſpending, you ſee they come home at night as weary as they can draw their legs after them.

*Reddit.* But God's workmen have a much harder taſk than they; hence are they ſet forth in ſcripture by the laborious ox, 1 Cor. ix. 9. Rev. iv. 7. Some derive the word διακονος, *deacon*, from κονις, which ſignifies duſt, to ſhew the laborioufneſs of their employment, labouring till even choaked with duſt and ſweat. It is ſaid of Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 13. " That for the work of Chriſt he was ſick, and " nigh unto death; not regarding his life, to ſupply their lack of " ſervice." The apoſtle's expreſſion, Col. i. *ult.* is very emphatical, " Whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving, according to his working, " which worketh in me mightily." The word αγωνιζομενος, ſignifies ſuch ſpending labour as puts a man into an agony; and bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.

12. *Prop.* The immediate end of the huſbandman's labour, and his ſervants labour is for the improvement of his land, to make it more flouriſhing and fruitful.

*Reddit.* The ſcope and end of the miniſtry is for the church's benefit and advantage. They muſt not lord it over God's heritage, as if the church were for them, and not they for the church; nor ſerve themſelves of it, but be the church's ſervants for Jeſus ſake, 2 Cor. iv. 6. The power they have received being for edification, and not for deſtruction, 2 Cor. x. 8. Chriſt hath given them to the churches; their gifts, their time, their ſtrength, and all their miniſterial talents, are not their own, but the church's ſtock and treaſure.

13. *Prop.* The workmen that labour in the fields are accountable for their work to him that employed them.

*Reddit.* Church-officers are alſo accountable to God for all the ſouls committed to them. They are ſtewards of the myſteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and ſtewards are accountable. " We watch for your ſouls, (ſaith the apoſtle) as they that muſt " give an account," Heb. xiii. 7. If theſe ſervants be unfaithful in their work and truſt, the blood of ſouls ſhall be required at their hands, Ezek. iii. 17, 18. which are *fulmina, non verba*, (ſaith Eraſmus) thunderbolts, rather than words. The guilt of blood is the greateſt guilt; and of all blood, the blood of ſouls.

14. *Prop.* Thoſe that ſpend their time and ſtrength all their days, in manuring and plowing in the fields, do maintain themſelves and their families by their labours; their hands are ſufficient for themſelves and theirs.

*Reddit.* " Even ſo hath God ordained, that they which preach the " goſpel, ſhould live by the goſpel," 1 Cor. ix. 14. " The work-

" man is worthy of his meat," Mat. x. 10. It is a ſad thing, if thoſe who break the bread of life to ſouls, ſhould be ſuffered to want bread themſelves. God would not have the mouth of an ox muzzled that treads out the corn, but have liberty to eat as well as work. Yet if any pretender to the miniſtry be like the heifer, that loves to tread out the corn, i. e. cares to do no work, but ſuch as brings in preſent pay; he therein ſufficiently diſcovers his beaſt-like diſpoſition. Miniſters muſt be faithful in their Maſter's work, and if men do not, God will reward them. For " he is not unrighteous to forget their " work, and labour of love," Heb. vi. 10.

15. *Prop.* It is a great trouble to huſbandmen in a buſy time, to be put off from their labours by ſtormy weather, which drives them out of the fields, and makes them let all lie, till it clear up again; yet, mean while, they are not idle, but employ themſelves in home-work.

*Reddit.* Even ſo in God's huſbandry, it is an unſpeakable affliction to God's workmen to be rendered uſeleſs and unſerviceable to the churches, by thoſe ſtorms of trouble, which drive them from their public miniſterial work. With what a heavy heart did Paul go off from his work at Epheſus, Acts xx. It ſpends a miniſter to preach, but more to be ſilent. It is a loud ſpeaking judgment, when God ſhall ſay to them as to Ezekiel, " Son of man, I will make thy " tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou ſhalt be dumb," Ezek. iii. 26. Such ſilencing providences, ſpeak thundering language to gracious hearts; yet, even then, the keepers of the vineyard have a private vineyard of their own to look after, they have much home-work, when no out-work.

16. *Prop.* There is a vaſt difference betwixt thoſe fields which have been well huſbanded, and dreſſed by a ſkilful and diligent huſbandman; and thoſe that have been long out of huſbandry. How fragrant is the one? How dry and barren the other? When you paſs by a field well dreſſed and fenced, every thing proſperous, and in exquiſite order, you may know, without farther enquiry, that a good huſbandman lives there.

*Reddit.* Thus ſtands the caſe betwixt thoſe places which God hath bleſſed with a faithful, painful miniſtry, and ſuch as have none, or worſe than none: for as the huſbandman's coſt and pains appear in the verdant and fragrant hue of his fields; ſo a miniſters pains and diligence are (ordinarily ſeen in the heavenly lives, and flouriſhing graces of the people. The churches of Corinth and Theſſalonica, where Paul and other holy inſtruments ſpent much of their time and pains, became famous and flouriſhing churches, 2 Cor. ix. 2. A ſpecial bleſſing comes along with a godly miniſter, to the place where ſpecial providence aſſigns him. Such places, like Gideon's fleece, have the dew of heaven lying on them, whilſt others round about are dry and barren.

17. *Prop.* The huſbandman is not diſcouraged, though the ſeed

lie long under the clods; he knows it will ſpring up at the laſt, and reward him, or thoſe that come after him, for their pains and patience in waiting for it.

*Reddit.* Miniſters ſhould not be preſently diſcouraged in their work, becauſe they ſee but little or no appearance of all the ſeed they have ſown among the people. The "ſervant of the Lord muſt be "patient towards all, waiting if at any time God will give them re-"pentance," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. And if it never ſpring up in his time, it may after his death; and if ſo, he ſhall not fail of his reward, John iv. 36, 37. "And he that reapeth, receiveth wages, "and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that ſoweth, and "he that reapeth, may rejoice together; and herein is that ſaying "true, one ſoweth, and another reapeth." Though miniſters die, yet their words live; yea, their words take hold of men when they are in the duſt, Zech. i. 6.

18. *Prop.* Huſbandmen find low grounds and vallies, moſt fertile; hills, how lofty ſoever they overtop the lower grounds, yet anſwer not the huſbandman's pains as the vallies do: theſe are beſt watered and ſecured from the ſcorching heat of the ſun.

*Reddit.* Experience ſhews us, that the humbleſt ſaints are moſt fruitful under the goſpel; "Theſe are they that receive with meek-"neſs the engraffed word," James i. 21. whoſe influences abide in them, as the rain doth in the low vallies. Happy is that miniſter, whoſe lot falls in ſuch a pleaſant valley. "Bleſſed are they that ſow "beſide all ſuch waters, that ſend forth thither the feet of the ox "and the aſs," Iſa. xxxii. 20. among theſe vallies run the pleaſant ſprings and purling brooks, which fertilize the neighbouring ground. Heavenly ordinances there, leave fruitful influences.

19. *Prop.* The firſt crop is uſually the beſt, and the longer the huſbandman tills his ground, the leſs it produces; after a few years its vigour and ſtrength is ſpent.

*Reddit.* The firſt entertainment of the goſpel is commonly the beſt; and what good is done by the miniſtry is often done at its firſt entrance. New things are pretty, and very taking. "John at firſt "was to the Jews a burning and ſhining light, and they were willing "[for a ſeaſon] to rejoice in his light," John v. 35. Paul was highly valued among the Galatians at firſt; ſuch was their zeal, that they could have plucked out their eyes, and have given them to him; but how quickly did this full tide ebb again? For he complains, Gal. iv. 15. "Where then is the bleſſedneſs ye ſpake of?"

20. *Prop. Laſtly*, When fields prove barren, and will not quit the huſbandman's coſt, nor anſwer the ſeed he ſows in them, he plucks up the hedges, and lays it waſte.

*Reddit.* So when churches grow formal and fruitleſs, the Lord removes his goſpel-preſence from them, plucks up the hedge of his protection from about them, and lays them open as waſte ground, to be over-run by their enemies. Jer. vii. 12. "Go to Shiloh, and ſee

" what I did unto it." What is become of thoſe once famous and flouriſhing churches of Aſia? Are they not laid waſte, and trodden down by infidels? And now go to, ſaith the great Huſbandman, " I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will pull up the " hedge thereof, and it ſhall be laid waſte," Iſa. v. 5.

Thus you ſee the allegory opened in its particulars: from the whole, I ſhall preſent you with theſe five enſuing *corollaries*.

*The firſt* Corollary.

*How great then are the dignities and privileges of the churches of Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath appropriated to himſelf, above all the people of the earth, to be his peculiar inheritance?* The reſt of the world is a waſte wilderneſs; all other places, how pleaſant ſoever, in reſpect of their natural amenity and delights, are truly enough called the dark places of the earth; diſmal, ſolitary cells, where *Ziim* and *Iim*, Bitterns, Cormorants, and every doleful creature dwells. But the church is the paradiſe of the earth, *a garden incloſed*, Cant. iv. 12. in whoſe hedges the goſpel birds chirp and ſing melodiouſly, Cant. ii. 12. Its beds are beds of ſpices, Cant. vi. 2. and betwixt its pleaſant banks, a cryſtal river of living water runs, Rev. xxii. 1. the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God, in the midſt whereof the Lord himſelf delights to walk. O Zion, with what pleaſures doth thou abound? If Bernard was ſo raviſhed with the delights of his *monaſtry*, becauſe of its green banks, and ſhady bowers, and herbs, and trees, and various objects to feed his eyes, and fragrant ſmells, and ſweet and various tunes of birds, together with the opportunities of devout contemplation, that he cried out admiringly, *Lord! what delight doſt thou provide, even for the poor!* How much more ſhould we be raviſhed with Zion's glory? For, *beautiful for ſituation is mount Zion*. Of whom it may much more truly be ſaid, what a *chronicler of our own once ſaid of England, That it is the fortunate iſland, the paradiſe of pleaſure, the garden of God, whoſe vallies are like Eden, whoſe hills are as Lebanon, whoſe ſprings are as Piſgah, whoſe rivers are as Jordan, whoſe wall is the ocean, and whoſe defence is the Lord Jehovah. Happy art thou, O Iſrael; who is like unto thee? Who can count the privileges wherewith Chriſt hath inveſted his churches? O let it never ſeem a light thing in our eyes, that we grow within his bleſſed incloſure. How ſweet a promiſe is that, Exod. xix. 5. " Ye " ſhall be to me a peculiar treaſure, above all people; for all the " earth is mine."

*The ſecond* Corollary.

Hence it follows, That ſpiritual barrenneſs is a great reproach and ſhame to Chriſtians. Shall God's huſbandry, which is planted, watered, fenced, filled with favours and mercies, be like the barren heath in the deſart? Surely it ſhould be ſaid of every ſoul that grows here, as the hiſtorian ſaith of Spain, that there is *nihil infructuoſum*,

* Speed's Chronicle.

*nihil ſterile;* nothing barren or unfruitful in it. God's vineyard is planted in a very fruitful hill. Iſa. v. 1. "And ſurely they that are "planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhould flouriſh in the courts of "our God; they ſhould bring forth fruit, even in old age, to ſhew "that God is upright," Pſal. xcii. 13, 14. "They are created in "Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath ordained they "ſhould walk in," Eph. ii. 10. "They are married unto Chriſt, that "they might bring forth fruit to God," Rom. vii. 4. An empty branch is a diſhonour to the root that bears it, a barren field to the huſbandman that owns it; God cannot endure that in his fields which he ſuffers in the wilderneſs.

*The third* Corollary.

If the church be God's huſbandry, then there is ſuch a ſpecial, gracious preſence of the Lord in his churches, as is not to be found in all the world beſide. Where may you expect to find the huſbandman but in his own fields? There lies his buſineſs, and there he delights to be. And where may we expect to find God but in the aſſemblies of his ſaints? "He walks among the golden candleſticks," Rev. ii. 1. I will walk among you, (ſaith he) and be your God, 2 Cor. vi. 16. Upon this account the church is called *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there, Ezek. xlviii. *ult.* You may ſee the footſteps of God in the creatures, but the face of God is only to be ſeen in his ordinances. Hence, Pſal. xxvii. 4. "David longed for the "temple, that he might ſee the beauty of the Lord." Now what is beauty, but a ſymmetry and proportion of parts? In the works of *creation* you ſee one attribute manifeſted in one thing, and another in another thing: but in the *ſanctuary* you may ſee beauty, even in all the attributes of God diſplayed there: And, indeed, we find in ſcripture ſuch aſtoniſhing expreſſions about the viſions of God in his church, that in reading them, a man can ſee little difference betwixt it and heaven; for as the church is called heaven, Mat. xxv. 1. ſo its deſcription is like that of heaven. Heb. xii. 22, 23. "You are "come to the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company "of angels," &c. And Rev. xxii. 4. "They ſhall ſee his face, "and his name ſhall be written in their foreheads." And ver. 6. The ſaints are repreſented "ſtanding nearer to the throne of God "than the angels themſelves." Hence alſo ordinances are called galleries, in which both ſaints and angels walk, beholding the glory of him that ſits upon the throne. Zech. iii. 7. "If you will keep "my ways, I will give you galleries to walk in among them that "ſtand by."

*The fourth* Corollary.

If the church be God's huſbandry, then thoſe that be employed in miniſterial work ought to be men of great judgment and experience in ſoul-affairs; for theſe are the labourers whom God, the myſtical Huſbandman employs and entruſts about his ſpiritual huſbandry. Should huſbandmen employ ignorant perſons, that neither un-

derſtand the rules nor proper ſeaſons of huſbandry; how much would ſuch workmen damnify and prejudice him? He will not employ ſuch to weed his fields, as know not wheat from tares; or to prune his trees, that think *midſummer* as fit for that work as December: much leſs will God. He qualifies all that he ſends with wiſdom for their work. "His workmen approve themſelves workmen "indeed, ſuch as need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of "truth," 2 Tim. ii. 15. As Bezaleel was furniſhed with wiſdom before he was employed in tabernacle-work; ſo Chriſt inſtructs his ſervants with ſkill and inſight, before they are employed in miniſterial work. He gives them a mouth and wiſdom, Luke xxi. 15. endues them with power from on high; as Chriſt was filled abundantly with the Spirit for his work, ſo, according to proportion, are thoſe that are ſent by him. John xx. 21, 22. "As my Father hath "ſent me, ſo ſend I you." And as for thoſe that run before they are ſent, and underſtand not the myſteries of the goſpel; I ſhall ſay no more of them but this; "Father, forgive them, for they know "not what they do."

*The fifth* Corollary.

To conclude, If the church be God's buſbandry, that is, if huſbandry have ſo many reſemblances of God's works about the church in it; then how inexcuſeable is the ignorance of huſbandmen in the things of God, who, beſides the word of the goſpel, have the teaching of the creatures; and can hardly turn their hands to any part of their work, but the Spirit hints one ſpiritual uſe or other from it to their ſouls? How do the ſcriptures abound with parables and lively ſimilitudes taken from huſbandry? From the field, the ſeed, the plow, the barn, from threſhing and winnowing; ſimilitudes alſo from planting, graffing, and pruning of *trees;* and not a few from the ordering of cattle. So that to what buſineſs ſoever you turn your hands, in any part of your calling, ſtill God meets you with one heavenly inſtruction or other. But alas! How few are able to improve their civil employments to ſuch excellent ends! theſe things are but briefly hinted in the ſcriptures, and thoſe hints ſcattered up and down, that they know not where to find them; and if they could, yet would it be difficult ſo to methodize them, as it is neceſſary they ſhould be, in order to their due improvement by meditation.

And therefore I judged it neceſſary to collect and prepare them for your uſe; and in this manner to preſent them to you as you find them in the following chapters. Read, conſider, and apply; and the Lord make you good huſbandmen for your own ſouls.

THE FIRST PART OF

# HUSBANDRY SPIRITUALIZED.

## CHAP. I.

### Upon the Induſtry of the Huſbandman.

*In the laborious Huſbandman you ſee*
*What all true Chriſtians are, or ought to be.*

OBSERVATION.

THE employment of the huſbandman is by all acknowledged to be very laborious; there is a multiplicity of buſineſs incumbent on him. The end of one work is but the beginning of another, every ſeaſon of the year brings its proper work with it: ſometimes you find him in his *fields*, dreſſing, plowing, ſowing, harrowing, weeding, or reaping; and ſometimes in his *barn*, threſhing or winnowing; ſometimes in his *orchard*, planting, graffing, or pruning his trees; and ſometimes among his *cattle*; ſo that he hath no time to be idle. As he hath a multiplicity of buſineſs, ſo every part of it is full of toil and ſpending labour: he eats not the bread of idleneſs, but earns it before he eats it; and, as it were, dips it in his own ſweat, whereby it becomes the ſweeter to him. Though ſin brought in the huſbandman's ſweat, Gen. iii. 19. yet now not to ſweat would increaſe his ſin, Ezek. xvi. 49.

APPLICATION.

Behold here the life of a ſerious Chriſtian, ſhadowed forth to the life. As the life of a huſbandman, ſo the life of a Chriſtian is no idle nor eaſy life. They that take up religion for *oſtentation*, and not for an *occupation*, and thoſe that place the buſineſs of it in notions and idle ſpeculations, in forms, geſtures, and external obſervances, may think and call it ſo: but ſuch as devote themſelves unto it, and make religion their buſineſs, will find it no eaſy work to exerciſe themſelves to godlineſs. Many there are that affect the reputation and *ſweet* of it who cannot endure the labour and *ſweat* of it. If men might be indulged to divide their heart betwixt God and the world, or to cull out the cheap and eaſy duties of it, and neglect the more difficult and coſtly ones, it were an eaſy thing to be a Chriſtian: but ſurely to have a reſpect to all God's commandments, to live the life, as well as ſpeak the language of a Chriſtian; to be holy in all manner of converſation, is not ſo eaſy. This will be evident, by

comparing the life of a Chriſtian with the life of a huſbandman, in theſe five particulars; wherein it will appear, that the work of a Chriſtian is by much the harder work of the two.

1. The huſbandman hath much to do, many things to look after; but the Chriſtian more: if we reſpect the extenſiveneſs of his work, he hath a large field indeed to labour in, Pſal. cxix. 96. "Thy com-" mandment is exceeding broad," of a vaſt extent and latitude, comprizing not only a multitude of external acts and duties, and guiding the offices of the outward man about them, but alſo taking in every thought and motion of the inner man within its compaſs.

You find in the word, a world of work cut out for Chriſtians; there is hearing-work, praying-work, reading, meditating, and ſelf-examining-work; it puts him alſo upon a conſtant watch over all the corruptions of his heart. Oh, what a world of work hath a Chriſtian about him? For of them he may ſay, as the hiſtorian doth of Hannibal, they are never quiet, whether conquering or conquered. How many weak, languiſhing graces hath he to recover, improve, and ſtrengthen? There is a weak faith, a languiſhing love, dull and faint deſires to be quickened and invigorated. And when all this is done, what a multitude of work do his ſeveral relations exact from him? He hath a world of buſineſs incumbent on him, as a parent, child, huſband, wife, maſter, ſervant, or friend, yea, not only to friends, but enemies. And, beſides all this, how many difficult things are there to be borne and ſuffered for Chriſt? And yet God will not allow his people to neglect any one of them: neither can he be a Chriſtian that hath not reſpect to every command, and is not holy in all manner of converſation, Pſal. cxix. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 11. every one of theſe duties, like the ſeveral ſpokes in a wheel, come to bear, in the whole round of a Chriſtian's converſation: ſo that he hath more work upon his hands than the huſbandman.

2. The huſbandman's work is confeſſed to be ſpending work, but not like the Chriſtian's. What Auguſtus ſaid of the young Roman, is verified in the true Chriſtian, *Quicquid vult, valde vult.* Whatſoever he doth in religion, he doth to purpoſe. Under the law, God rejected the *ſnail* and the *aſs*, Lev. xi. 30. Exod. xiii. 13. And under the goſpel, he allows no ſluggiſh, lazy profeſſor, 1 Tim. v. 11, 13. Sleepy duties are utterly unſuitable to the living God; he will have the very ſpirits diſtilled and offered up to him in every duty, John iv. 24. he beſtows upon his people the very ſubſtance and kernel of mercies, and will not accept from them the ſhells and ſhadows of duties; not the ſkin, but the inwards, and the fat that covereth the inwards, were required under the law, Exod. xxix. 30. And every ſacrifice under the goſpel, muſt be *ſacrificium medullatum*, a ſacrifice full of marrow; obſerve the manner in which their work is to be performed.

Rom. xii. 11. In ſerving God, fervent in ſpirit, or hiſſing hot.

2 Pet. i. 10. In ſecuring ſalvation, diligent; or doing it thoroughly and enough.

1 Tim. iv. 7. In godlineſs, exerciſing or ſtripping themſelves; as for a race.

Luke xiii. 24. In the purſuit of happineſs, ſtriving even to an agony.

Acts xxvi. 7. In prayer, ſerving God inſtantly; or in a ſtretched out manner; yea, pouring out their hearts before him, Pſal. lxii. 8. as if the body were left like a dead corps upon the knees, whilſt the ſpirit is departed from it, and aſcended to God. This is the manner of his work: judge then how much harder this work is, than to ſpend the ſweat of the brow in manual labour.

3. The huſbandman finds his work as he left it, he can begin one day where he left the other; but it is not ſo with the Chriſtian; a bad heart and a buſy devil, diſorder and ſpoil his work every day. The Chriſtian finds not his heart in the morning, as he left it at night; and even when he is about his work, how many ſet-backs doth he meet with? Satan ſtands at his right hand (the working hand) to reſiſt him, Zech. iii. 1. when he would do good, evil (the evil of his own heart and nature) is preſent with him.

4. The huſbandman hath ſome reſting-days, when he throws aſide all his work, and takes his recreation; but the Chriſtian hath no reſting-day, till his dying-day; and then he ſhall reſt from his labours. Religion allows no idle day, "but requires him to be always abounding in the work of the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 18. When one duty is done, another calls for him; the Lord's day is a day of reſt to the huſbandman, but no day in the week ſo laborious to the Chriſtian. O it is a ſpending day to him. When he hath gathered in the crop of one duty, he is not to ſit down ſatisfied therewith, or ſay as that rich worldling did, Luke xii. 19. "Soul, take thine eaſe, "thou haſt goods laid up for many years;" but muſt to plow again, and count it well if the vintage reach to the ſeed-time, Lev. xxvi. 5. I mean, if the ſtrength, influence, and comfort of one duty, hold out to another duty; and that it may be ſo, and there be no room left for idleneſs, God hath appointed ejaculatory prayer, to fill up the intervals, betwixt ſtated and more ſolemn duties. Theſe are to keep in the fire, which kindled the morning ſacrifice, to kindle the evening ſacrifice. When can the Chriſtian ſit down and ſay, *Now all my work is ended, I have nothing to do without doors, or within?*

*Laſtly*, There is a time when the labour of the huſbandman is ended; old age and weakneſs takes them off from all employment; they can look only upon their labourers, but cannot do a ſtroke of work themſelves; they can tell you what they did in their younger years, but now (ſay they) we muſt leave it to younger people: we cannot be young always; but the Chriſtian is never ſuperannuated as to the work of religion; yea, the longer he lives, the more his Maſter expects from him. When he is full of days, God expects he ſhould

be full of fruits, Pſal. xcii. 14. "They ſhall bring forth fruit in old "age, they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing."

## REFLECTIONS.

*The worlding's reflection.*

1. How hard have I laboured for the meat that periſheth? Prevented the dawning of the day, and laboured as in the very fire, and yet is the Chriſtian's work harder than mine? Surely, then, I never yet underſtood the work of Chriſtianity. Alas, my ſleepy prayers, and formal duties, even all that ever I performed in my life, never coſt me that pains, that one hour at plow hath done. I have either wholly neglected, or at beſt, ſo lazily performed religious duties, that I may truly ſay, I offer to God what coſt me nothing. Wo is me, poor Wretch! How is the judgment of Korah ſpiritually executed upon me? The earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed up his body; but it hath opened its mouth and ſwallowed up my heart, my time, and all my affections. How far am I from the kingdom of God!

*The formaliſt's reflection.*

2. And how little better is my caſe, who have indeed profeſſed religion, but never made it my buſineſs? Will an empty (though ſplendid) profeſſion ſave me? How many brave ſhips have periſhed in the ſtorms, notwithſtanding their fine names, the *Proſperous*, the *Succeſs*, the *Happy Return?* A fine name could not protect them from the rocks, nor will it ſave me from hell. I have done by religion, as I ſhould have done by the world; prayed, as if I prayed not; and heard, as if I heard not. I have given to God but the ſhadow of duty, and can never expect from him a real reward.

*The reflections of a ſlothful Chriſtian.*

3. How unlike a Chriſtian doſt thou alſo. O my ſoul, go about thy work; though upright in the main; yet how little zeal and activity doſt thou expreſs in thy duties? Awake love and zeal, ſeeſt thou not the toil and pains men take for the world? How do they prevent the dawning of the day? and labour as in the very fire till night; and all this for a trifle! Should not every drop of ſweat which I ſee trickle from their brows, fetch, as it were, a drop of blood from my heart, who am thus convinced and reproved of ſhameful lazineſs, by their indefatigable diligence? Do they pant after the duſt of the earth? Amos ii. 7. And ſhall not I pant after God? Pſal. xlii. 1. Ah, my ſoul, it was not wont to be ſo with thee in the days of my firſt profeſſion. Should I have had no more communion with God in duties then, it would have broken my heart: I ſhould have been weary of my life. Is this a time for one to ſtand idle, who ſtands at the door of eternity? What, now ſlack-handed, when ſo near to my everlaſting reſt, Rom. xiii. 11. or haſt thou found the work of God ſo unpleaſant to thee? Prov. iii. 17. or the trade of godlineſs ſo unprofitable? Pſal. xix. 12. Or knoweſt thou not, that millions,

now in hell, periſhed for want of ſerious diligence in religion, Luke xiii. 34. nor doth my diligence for God, anſwer to that which Chriſt hath done and ſuffered, to purchaſe my happineſs: or to the preparations he hath made in heaven for me? Or doſt thou forget that thy Maſter's eye is always upon thee, whilſt thou art lazying and loitering? Or would the damned live at this rate as I do, if their day of grace might be recalled? For ſhame, my ſoul, for ſhame! rouze up thyſelf, and fall to thy work, with a diligence anſwerable to the weight thereof; for it is no vain work concerning thee, it is thy life.

## THE POEM.

Religion *When* advanc'd in pow'r,
Will make you *Huſband* every hour.
'Twill make *Men* ſtrive with all their might,
And therein *Find* a ſweet delight.
If there were *Nought* beſides that pay
Chriſt gives *To* cheer us in our way;
Should we not *Do* the beſt we can?
For there's *No* ſuch reward from man.
Shall others *Work*, and not regard
Their ſtrength *To* get a ſmall reward?
Whilſt we *Turn* ſlugs, and loiter thus?
O that *Their* zeal might quicken us!
Why are our *Hands*, and feet ſo ſlow,
When we *Unto* our buſineſs go?
How can we *Then* Chriſt's pay expect,
And yet the *Chriſtian's* work reject?
If this, then *Alſo* that embrace
Them both; *If* not, we both diſgrace.
Some if *They* could theſe two divide,
'Twould *Pleaſe* them well, with Chriſt to ſide!
But if they *May* not, then it were
As good *Ceaſe* pleading, they'll not hear.
Rouſe up *From* ſloth, my ſoul betake
Thee to thy *Work*, no cavils make.
O ſtrive, *And* try! Saints ſay that even,
The pain they *Take*, hath much of heaven.
But yet *Their* beſt wine's kept till laſt,
Their reſt, and *Eaſe* comes all ſo faſt.

## CHAP. II.

### Upon the Thriftineſs of the Huſbandman.

*The hardeſt lab'rers are the thriving men,*
*If you'll have thriving ſouls, be active then.*

#### OBSERVATION.

INDUSTRY and diligence is the way to thrive and grow rich in the world. The earth muſt be manured, or its increaſe is in vain expected; *Qui fugit molam, fugit farinam;* He that refuſes the mill, refuſes the meal, (ſaith the proverb). "The diligent ſoul "ſhall be made fat." Solomon hath two proverbs concerning thriftineſs and increaſe in the world. In Prov. x. 4. he ſaith, "The "hand of the diligent maketh rich." And in ver. 22. he ſaith, "The bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich." Theſe are not *contradictory*, but *confirmatory* each of other; one ſpeaks of the *principal*, the other of the *inſtrumental* cauſe. Diligence without God's bleſſing will not do it; and that bleſſing cannot be expected without diligence; therefore huſbandmen ply their buſineſs with unwearied pains, they do even lodge in the midſt of their labours as that good huſband Boaz did, Ruth ii. 3. They are *parſimonious* of their time, but *prodigal* of their ſweat and ſtrength, becauſe they find this to be the thriving way.

#### APPLICATION.

As nature opens her treaſures to none but the diligent, ſo neither doth grace. He that will be a rich, muſt be a painful Chriſtian; and whoſoever will cloſely ply the trade of godlineſs, ſhall comfortably and quickly find, "That in keeping God's commands there is great "reward," Pſalm xix. 11. God is a "bountiful rewarder of ſuch "as diligently ſeek him," Heb. xi. 6. They muſt not indeed work for wages, * nor yet will God ſuffer their work to go unrewarded; yea, it ſufficiently rewards itſelf, 1 Tim. vi. 6. And its reward is twofold; (1.) Preſent and in part; (2.) Future, and in full. Mark x. 29, 30. Now in this time an hundred-fold, even from ſuffering, which ſeems the moſt unprofitable part of the work, and in the world to come life everlaſting. If you aſk what preſent advantage Chriſtians have by their diligence? I anſwer, as much and more than the huſbandman hath from all his toils and labours. Let us compare the particulars, and ſee what the huſbandman gets that the Chriſtian gets not alſo. Compare your gains, and you will quickly ſee the odds.

1. You get credit and reputation by your diligence; it is a commendation and honour to you to be active and ſtirring men: But how much more honour doth God put upon his laborious ſervants?

* *Non mercenarii ſed operarii.*

It is the higheſt honour of a creature to be active and uſeful for its God. Saints are called *veſſels of honour*, as they are fitted for the maſter's uſe, 2 Tim. ii. 21. Wherein conſiſts the honour of angels but in this, that they are miniſtering ſpirits, ſerviceable creatures? And all the apoſtles gloried in the title of ſervants. The loweſt office in which a man can ſerve God, even that of Nethinim, or door-keepers, which was the loweſt order or rank of officers in the houſe of God, Ezek. xliv. 10, 11. is yet preferred by David before the ſervice of the greateſt prince on earth, Pſalm lxxxiv. 10. It is no ſmall honour to be active for God.

2. You have this benefit by your labour, that thereby you avoid looſe and evil company, which would draw you into miſchief. By diligence for God, the Chriſtian alſo is ſecured from temptation; "God is with them while they are with him," 2 Chron. xv. 2. Communion with God in the way of duty is a great preſervative againſt temptations. The *ſchoolmen* put the queſtion, how the *angels* and glorified ſaints become impeccant? And reſolve it thus: That they are ſecured from ſin by the beatifical viſion; and ſure I am that the viſions of God, not only in glory, but now alſo in duty, are marvellous defences againſt ſin; and they who are moſt active for God, have the fulleſt and cleareſt viſions of God, John xiv. 21.

3. You have this benefit by your labour, that it tends much to the health of our bodies. The Chriſtian hath this benefit by his labour, that it tends to a healthful ſtate of ſoul; "The way of the Lord is "ſtrength to the upright," Prov. x. 29. As thoſe that follow their daily labours in the field, have much more health than citizens that live idly, or ſcholars that live a ſedentary life: So the active Chriſtian enjoys more ſpiritual health, and is troubled with fewer complaints than others.

4. By diligence in your civil employments, you preſerve your eſtates, and are kept from running behind-hand in the world. Bailiffs trouble not ſuch men's doors; they uſually have the forefoot of their neighbours. And by activity and diligence for God, ſouls are kept from backſliding, and running back in their graces and comforts. Remiſſneſs and intermiſſion in our duties are the firſt ſteps and degrees by which a ſoul declines and waſtes as to his ſpiritual eſtate.

5. Your pains and diligence in the fields, make your bed ſweet to you at night, Eccleſ. v. 12. "Reſt is ſweet to a labouring man, whe-"ther he eat little or much." But the diligent life of a Chriſtian makes the clods of the valley, his grave, ſweet unto him, 2 Cor. i. 12. 2 Kings xx. 3. "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before "thee," &c. Think Chriſtian, how ſweet it will be for thee when thou comeſt to die, to ſay then as thy Redeemer did, when near his death, John xvii. 4, 5. "I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt "me to do; and now, O Father, glorify me with thine own ſelf."

6. The expence of your ſweat fills your purſes, you get eſtates by your diligence and labour; but what are your gains to the gains of

Chriſtians? They can get in an hour that which they will not part with for all the gold and ſilver on earth, Prov. iii. 14.

So that compare theſe labourers, as to all their advantages and you ſhall ſee, that there is no trade like that which the diligent Chriſtian drives.

REFLECTIONS.

*Reflections of the ſlothful ſoul.*

1. Bluſh then, O my ſoul, at the conſideration of thy lazineſs and ſloth, which is attended with ſo many ſpiritual wants! And can I wonder at it, when I refuſe the painful way of duty, in which the precious fruits of godlineſs are only to be found? If the fruits lie upon the ſurface of duty, or could be had with wiſhes, I ſhould not want them; but to dig deep and take pains I cannot. My deſires, like thoſe of the ſlothful man, kill me, becauſe my hands refuſe to labour, Prov. xxi. 25. If every duty were to be rewarded preſently with gold, would I not have been more aſſiduous in them, than I have been? And yet I know that a heart full of the grace and comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, is better than a houſe full of gold and ſilver. O what a compoſition of ſtupidity and ſloth am I! I have been all for the ſhort cut to comfort, when conſtant experience teacheth, that the further way about, by painful duty, is the nearer way to it. What pains do huſbandmen take? What peril do ſeamen run for a little gain? O ſluggiſh heart! wilt thou do nothing for eternal treaſures?

*Secondly*, If there be ſuch great reward attending diligence in duty, then why art thou ſo apt, O my ſoul, to caſt off duty, becauſe thou findeſt not preſent comfort in it? How quickly am I diſcouraged, if I preſently find not what I expect in duty? Whereas the well is deep, and much pains muſt be taken to draw up thoſe waters of joy, Iſa. xii. 3. There is a golden vein in the mount of duty, but it lies deep; and becauſe I meet not with it as ſoon as I expect, my lazy heart throws by the ſhovel, and crys, Dig I cannot.

*The worldling's reflections.*

*Thirdly*, If this be indeed the rich and thriving trade, why do I puddle about the poor, low things of the world ſo much, neglecting the rich trade of godlineſs for it? O how much of my time and ſtrength have theſe things devoured? Had I employed that time in communion with God, would it not have turned to a better account? Thinkeſt thou in earneſt, O my ſoul, that God hath endowed thee with ſuch excellent faculties, capable of the moſt Divine and heavenly employments, or that Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhed his invaluable, precious blood, or that he hath ſent forth the glorious Spirit of holineſs, and all this to fit men for no higher, no nobler employments than theſe.

Is this the end of thy wonderful creation? Doth God whirl about the heavens in endleſs revolutions, to beget time for this? Or doth he not rather expect that the weightieſt work ſhould engroſs thy

greateſt ſtrength, and choiceſt hours? O that I could once conſider, what a good Maſter Chriſtians ſerve, who will not only abundantly reward them at night, but brings them their food into the fields to encourage them in their labour! What pity is it, that ſo good a Maſter ſhould be ſo badly ſerved as he hath been by me! Hark how he pleads to gain my heart:

## THE POEM,

By way of Dialogue betwixt Chriſt and the World.

*Christ.*

O Why ſo free of ſweat and time,
For what ere long will not be thine?
Or if it might, thou ſell'ſt to loſs,
A precious ſoul for laſting droſs.
Thoſe weary hands, and toiling brains,
Might be employ'd for better gains.
Wouldſt thou but work as hard for me,
As for the world which *cozens* thee;
Thy gains ſhould be a thouſand fold:
For my revenue's more than gold.

*World.*

Soul, I have always found thee willing,
Rather by me to earn a ſhilling,
Than truſt uncertain things which lie
Beyond thee in eternity.
Shall things unſeen now tempt thee? Tuſh,
A bird in hand's worth two i' th' buſh.
I pay thee wages down in hand,
This thou canſt feel, taſte, underſtand,
O let not ſuch a vain pretence
Prevail againſt thy very ſenſe.

*Christ.*

Thus beaſts are led, thus birds are ſnar'd,
Thus ſouls for ruin are prepar'd.
What! truſt no farther than you ſee,
You'll truſt a thief as far as me.
Deluded wretch! Will nought but ſight
And ſenſe convince thee? O how right,
How juſt is God? whoſe direful ſcourge
Such arguments in hell ſhall urge.

*World.*

Chriſt threatens wrath to come, but I
Do threaten thee with poverty.
And why wilt thou thyſelf, and thoſe
That are ſo dear, to want expoſe!

Come ſee, the ſaints, for all their brags,
How well they thrive, they're cloth'd in rags.

*CHRIST.*

If my dear ſaints in rags do go,
'Tis not religion clothes them ſo;
But by ſuch wants the Lord ſecures
Their ſouls againſt the killing ſnares:
They all are heirs, tho' under age,
Expectants of their heritage:
Kept ſhort for preſent, yet contemn
A change with thoſe that ſcoff at them.

*WORLD.*

It is vain to plead, for I
With preſent things charm pow'rfully;
Whate'er thou offer'ſt, they'll deſpiſe,
I hold them pris'ners by their eyes.

*CHRIST.*

If they will ſerve no other Lord,
Then let it ſtand upon record,
Againſt their ſouls, that they refus'd
My wages, and my grace abus'd.
Remember this when they ſhall ſee
All turn'd to aſhes that's in thee.

## ANOTHER.

NONE will deny but thoſe are bleſſed pains
Which are attended with the richeſt gains.
Grant this, and then moſt clearly 'tis inferr'd,
Soul-work to all deſerves to be preferr'd.
This is an unknown trade: O who can count
To what the gains of godlineſs amount?
For one poor ſhilling, O what riſks ſome run?
Some toiling, as i' th' fire, from ſun to ſun.
Whereas one hour ſpent with God brings in
Such heavenly treaſures, that poor ſouls have been
Enrich'd for ever. Even as you ſee
A prince's favourite, upon the knee,
Can in an hour's time more wealth obtain,
Than all your lives by labour you can gain.
Pray'r-gains are great, and quick returns are made,
Sure then the Chriſtian drives the richeſt trade.
'Tis true the hypocrite that never drove
A ſerious trade for heaven may bankrupt prove:
But holy ſouls, who mind, and cloſely ply
Their bus'neſs, greatly are enrich'd thereby:

The diff'rence 'twixt the one, and th' other's beſt
By ſuch a ſimile as this, expreſt:
As in a ſummer's day you often ſee
The wanton butterfly, and painful bee;
On fragrant flowers fix, whence one doth ſtrive
To bear his precious burden to the hive;
The other's pains no profit with it brings,
His time is ſpent in painting of his wings.
When winter comes, the bee hath full ſupplies,
The other creeps into an hole, and dies.
Like different events ſhall be betwixt
The painful ſaint, and lazy notioniſt.

## CHAP. III.

### Upon the cheerfulneſs of the Huſbandman.

*The plowman ſings, and whiſtles, though he ſweat,*
*Shall Chriſtians droop, becauſe their work is great?*

#### OBSERVATION.

THOUGH the labours of the huſbandman are very great and toilſome, yet with what cheerfulneſs do they go through them? It is very delightful to hear the melody they make, by whiſtling, as they follow the plow; yea, the very horſes have their bells, which make a pleaſant noiſe. *Horſes* (ſaith Mr Fuller) *will do more for a whiſtle than a whip;* and their bells do, as it were, gingle away their wearineſs. I have been often delighted with this country muſic, whereby they ſweeten their hard labours with an innocent pleaſure, and verify the ſaying of the poet:

*Tempus in agrorum cultu conſumere dulce eſt.* Ovid.

Altho' they plow from morning until night,
Time ſteals away with pleaſure and delight.

#### APPLICATION.

BUT how much greater cauſe have the people of God to addreſs themſelves unto his work with all cheerfulneſs of ſpirit? And, indeed, ſo far as the heart is ſpiritual, it delights in its duties. It is true, the work of a Chriſtian is painful, and much more ſpending than the huſbandman's, (as was opened, Chap. 1.) but then it as much exceeds in the delights and pleaſures that attend it. What is the Chriſtian's work, but "with joy to draw water out of the wells of "ſalvation?" Iſa. xii. 3. You may ſee what a pleaſant path the paths of duty is, by the cheerfulneſs of thoſe that have walked in

them, Pſal. cxix. 14. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy judgments, "as much as in all riches." And by the promiſes that are made to ſuch, Pſal. cxxxviii. 5. "Yea, they ſing in the ways of the Lord, "for great is the glory of the Lord." And again, "You ſhall have "a ſong as in the night, when an holy ſolemnity is kept, and glad-"neſs of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe, to come to the "mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Iſrael," Iſa. xxx. 29.

And, laſtly, by the many commands, whereby joy in the way of the Lord is made the duty of the ſaints. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye "righteous, for praiſe is comely for the upright," Pſal. xcvii. 12. "Rejoice, and again I ſay, rejoice," Phil. iv. 4. where the command is doubled, yea, not only ſimple rejoicing, but the higheſt degree of that duty comes within the command. Pſal. cxxxii. 9, 16. "Shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." And Luke vii. 22, 23. they are bid *to leap for joy*, when about the difficulteſt part of their work. And that you may ſee there is a ſufficient ground for it, and that it is not like the mad mirth of ſinners, be pleaſed to conſider,

1*ſt*. The nature of the work about which they are employed: It is the moſt excellent and heavenly employment that ever ſouls were acquainted with. O what a raviſhing and delightful thing it is to walk with God! And yet by this, the whole work of a Chriſtian is expreſſed, Gen. xvii. 1. Can any life compare with this, for pleaſure? Can they be chill that walk in the ſun-ſhine? Or ſad, that abide in the fountain of all delights; and walk with him whoſe name is the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. i. 3. "In whoſe preſence is the "fulneſs of joy," Pſal. xvi. 11. O what an angelical life doth a Chriſtian then live?

Or, 2*dly*, If we conſider the variety of ſpiritual employments, *Varietas delectat*. Change of employment takes off the tedioufneſs of labour. Variety of voices pleaſes the ear, variety of colours delights the eye, the ſame meat prepared ſeveral ways, pleaſes the palate more, and clogs it leſs. But oh the variety of choice diſhes wherewith God entertains his people in a Sabbath! as the word, prayer, ſacraments, &c. Iſa. lviii. 13. If thou call the Sabbath thy delights; or, as Tremellius renders it, thy delicate things "My ſoul (ſaith David) ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs," Pſal. lxiii. 5.

3*dly*, or *laſtly*, If we conſider the ſuitableneſs of this work to a regenerate ſoul. Is it any pain for a bird to fly? Or a fiſh to ſwim? Is the eye tired with beautiful objects? Or the ear with melodious ſounds? As little can a ſpiritual ſoul be wearied with ſpiritual and heavenly exerciſes. Rom. vii. 22. "I delight in the law of God after the inner man." *Gravia non gravitant in eorum loco*, (ſaith the philoſopher) weighty things are not heavy in their own element, or centre. And ſurely God is the centre of all gracious ſpirits. A ſaint can ſit from morning to night to hear diſcourſes of the love and

lovelineſs of Jeſus Chriſt. The ſight of your thriving flocks and flouriſhing fields, cannot yield you that pleaſure which an upright ſoul can find in one quarter of an hour's communion with God. "They that are after the fleſh, (ſaith the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 5.) do "mind the things of the fleſh, and they that are after the Spirit, the "things of the Spirit." But then look how much heavenly objects tranſcend earthly ones, and how much the ſoul is more capable of delight in thoſe objects, than the groſs and duller ſenſes are in theirs; ſo much doth the pleaſure ariſing from duty excel all ſenſitive delights on earth.

REFLECTIONS.

*The carnal heart's reflection.*

How am I caſt and condemned by this, may I ſay, who never ſavoured this ſpiritual delight in holy duties! When I am about my earthly employments, I can go on unweariedly from day to day; all the way is down-hill to my nature, and the wheels of my affections being oiled with carnal delight, run ſo faſt, that they have need moſt times of trigging. Here I rather need the curb than the ſpur. O how fleet and nimble are my ſpirits in theſe their purſuits! but O what a ſlug am I in religious duties! ſure if my heart were renewed by grace, I ſhould delight in the law of God, Rom. vii. 22. All the world is alive in their ways, every creature enjoys his proper pleaſure; and is there no delight to be found in the paths of holineſs? Is godlineſs only a dry root that bears no pleaſant fruits? No, there are doubtleſs incomparable pleaſures to be found therein; but ſuch a carnal heart as mine ſavours them not.

*The hypocrite's reflection.*

I cannot ſay but I have found delight in religious duties, but they have been only ſuch as rather ſprang from the oſtentation of gifts and applauſes of men, than any ſweet and real communion I have had with God through them; they have rather proved food and fuel to my pride, than food to my ſoul. Like the nightingale, I can ſing ſweetly, when I obſerve others to liſten to me, and be affected with my muſic. O falſe, deceitful heart, ſuch delight as this will end in howling! were my ſpirit right, it would as much delight in retirements for the enjoyment of God, as it doth in thoſe duties that are moſt expoſed to the obſervation of man. Will ſuch a ſpring as this maintain a ſtream of affections when carnal motives fail? What wilt thou anſwer, O my ſoul! to that queſtion? Job xxvii. 9, 10. "Will God "hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? Will he delight him-"ſelf in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" What wilt thou reply to this queſtion? Deceive not thou thyſelf, O my ſoul! thou wilt doubtleſs be eaſily perſuaded to let go that thou never delightedſt in, and, from an hypocrite in religion, quickly become an apoſtate from religion.

*The upright heart's reflection.*

From all this the upright heart takes advantage to rouze up its delight in God, and thus it expoſtulateth with itſelf: Doth the plowman ſing amidſt his drudging labours, and whiſtle away his wearineſs in the fields; and ſhall I droop amidſt ſuch heavenly employment? O my ſoul, what wanteſt thou here, to provoke thy delight? If there be ſuch an affection as delight in thee, methinks ſuch an object as the bleſſed face of God in ordinances ſhould excite it. Ah! how would this ennoble all my ſervices, and make them angel-like! how glad are thoſe bleſſed creatures to be employed for God! No ſooner were they created, but they ſang together, and ſhouted for joy, Job xxxviii. 7. How did they fill the air with heavenly melody, when ſent to bring the joyful tidings of a Saviour to the world! Aſcribing glory to God in the higheſt, even to the higheſt of their powers. Yea, this delight would make all my duties Chriſt-like; and the nearer that pattern, the more excellent: he delighted to do his Father's will, it was to him meat and drink, Pſalm xl. 7. John iv. 32, 34.

Yea, it would not only ennoble, but facilitate all my duties, and be to me as wings to a bird in flying, or ſails to a ſhip in motion. *Non tardat uncta rota;* oiled wheels run freely: "Or ever I was aware, "my ſoul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." O what is the reaſon (my God) my delight in thee ſhould be ſo little? Is it not becauſe my unbelief is ſo great? Rouſe up my delights, O thou fountain of pleaſure! and let me ſwim down the ſtream of holy joy in duty, into the boundleſs ocean of thoſe immenſe delights that are in thy preſence, and at thy right hand for evermore.

## THE POEM.

O WHAT a dull, deſponding heart is mine!
That takes no more delight in things divine.
When all the creatures, both in heav'n and earth,
Enjoy their pleaſures, and are big with mirth.
Angels and ſaints that are before the throne,
In extaſies and raptures every one
Perpetually is held; each bleſſed ſpirit
The pureſt, higheſt joys doth there inherit:
The ſaints on earth, in their imperfect ſtate,
Thoſe peerleſs joys, by faith do antedate.
To nat'ral men, who ſavour not this pleaſure,
Yet bounteous nature doth unlock her treaſure
Of ſenſitive delights; yea, ſtrange to tell,
Bold ſinners rant it all the way to hell.
Like fiſh that play in Jordan's ſilver ſtream,
So theſe in ſenſual luſts, and never dream
Of that dread ſea to which the ſtream doth tend,
And to their pleaſures puts a fatal end.

Yea, birds and beaſts, as well as men, enjoy
Their innocent delights: theſe chirp and play;
The cheerful birds among the branches ſing,
And make the neighb'ring groves with muſic ring:
With various warbling notes they all invite
Our raviſh'd ears with pleaſure and delight.
The new-fall'n lambs will, in a ſun-ſhine day,
About their feeding dams jump up, and play.
Are ciſterns ſweet? and is the fountain bitter?
Or can the ſun be dark when glow-worms glitter?
Have inſtruments their ſweet, melodious airs?
All creatures their delights; and ſaints not theirs?
Yea, theirs tranſcend theſe ſenſual ones as far
As noon-day Phœbus doth a twinkling ſtar.
Why droop I then, may any creature have
A life like mine for pleaſure? Who e'er gave
The like encouragement that Chriſt hath giv'n,
To do his will on earth, as 'tis in heav'n?

## CHAP. IV.

### Upon the due Quality of Arable Land.

*Corn land muſt neither be too fat, nor poor;*
*The middle ſtate ſuits beſt with Chriſtians, ſure.*

#### OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN find, by experience, that their arable lands may be dreſſed too much, as well as too little; if the ſoil be over-rank, the ſeed ſhoots up ſo much into the ſtalk, that it ſeldom ears well; and if too thin and poor, it wants its due nutriment, and comes not to perfection. Therefore their care is, to keep it in heart, but not to over-dreſs, or under-dreſs it. The end of all their coſt and pains about it is fruit; and therefore reaſon tells them, that ſuch a ſtate and temperament of it, as beſt fits it for fruit, is beſt both for it and them.

#### APPLICATION.

AND doth not ſpiritual experience teach Chriſtians that a mediocrity and competency of the things of this life, beſt fit them for the fruits of obedience, which is the end and excellency of their beings? A man may be over-mercied, as well as over-afflicted; *Raro fumant fælicibus aræ*, the altars of the rich ſeldom ſmoke. When our outward enjoyments are by providence ſhaped, and fitted to our con-

dition, as a ſuit is to the body, that ſits cloſe and neat, neither too ſhort, nor too long; we cannot deſire a better condition in this world. This was it that wiſe Agur requeſted of God, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food conve-"nient for me, leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay who is the "Lord? Or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God "in vain." Againſt both he prays *equally*, not *abſolutely*; that had been his ſin; but, comparatively, and ſubmiſſively to the will of God. He had rather, if God ſee it fit to avoid both of theſe extremes; but what would he have then? Why, food convenient. Or, according to the Hebrew, give me my prey, or ſtatute-bread; which is a metaphor from birds which fly up and down to prey for their young, and what they get they diſtribute among them; they bring them enough to preſerve their lives, but not more than enough to lie mouldering in the neſt. Such a proportion Agur deſired, and the reaſon why he deſired it is drawn from the danger of both extremes. He meaſured, like a wiſe Chriſtian, the convenience or inconvenience of his eſtate in the world, by its ſuitableneſs or unſuitableneſs to the end of his being, which is the ſervice of his God. He accounted the true excellence of his life to conſiſt in its reference and tendency to the glory of his God; and he could not ſee how a *redundancy*, or too great a *penury* of earthly comforts could fit him for that; but a middle eſtate, equally removed from both extremes, beſt fitted that end. And this was all that good Jacob, who was led by the ſame Spirit, looked at, Gen. xxviii. 20. "And Jacob vowed a vow, ſaying, "if God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and "give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, ſo that I come again "to my father's houſe in peace, then ſhall the Lord be my God." Poor Jacob, he deſires no great matters in the world, food and raiment will ſatisfy him; in ſpiritual matters his deſires are boundleſs, he is the moſt greedy and unſatisfied man in the world, Hoſ. xii. 4. but in the matters of this life, if he can get from God but *offam et aquam*, a morſel of meat, and a mouthful of water, he will not envy the richeſt Crœſus, or Craſſus upon earth. *Cibus et potus ſunt divitiæ Chriſtianorum*; meat and drink are the riches of Chriſtians. *Divitiæ ſunt ad legem naturæ compoſita paupertas*, ſaith Pomponius Atticus; riches are ſuch a poverty, or mediocrity, as hath enough for nature's uſes; and ſuch a ſtate is beſt accommodated, both to the condition, and to the deſires of a ſaint.

1. To his condition, for what is a ſaint but a ſtranger and pilgrim upon earth, a man in a ſtrange country travelling homeward? So David profeſſed himſelf, Pſalm cxix. 12. "I am a ſtranger in this "earth." And ſo thoſe worthies, who are now at home in heaven, Heb. xi. 13. they profeſſed themſelves to be ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth, and to ſeek a country; a *viaticum* contents a traveller, he will not incumber himſelf with ſuperfluous things, which would rather clog and tire, than expedite and help him in his journey.

2. It ſuits beſt with his deſires, I mean his regular and adviſed deſires. For,

1. A gracious ſoul earneſtly deſires a free condition in the world; he his ſenſible he hath much work to do, a race to run, and is loth to be clogged, or have his foot in the ſnare of the cares or pleaſures of this life. He knows that fulneſs expoſes to wantonneſs and irreligion, Deut. vi. 12. Hoſ. xiii. 6. It is hard, in the midſt of ſo many tempting objects, to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon the affections. The heart of a Chriſtian, like the moon, commonly ſuffers an eclipſe when it is at the full, and that by the interpoſition of the earth.

It was Solomon's fulneſs that drew out and diſſolved his ſpirits, and brought him to ſuch a low ebb in ſpirituals, that it remains a queſtion with ſome, Whether he ever recovered it to his dying day. As it is the miſery of the poor to be neglected of men, ſo it is the miſery of the rich to neglect God. Who can be poorer than to have the world, and love it? Or richer, than to enjoy but little of it, and live above it?

And, on the other ſide, extreme poverty is no leſs expoſed to ſin and danger, Lev. vi. 2, 3, 4. As high and lofty trees are ſubject to ſtorms and tempeſts, ſo the lower ſhrubs to be browſed on by every beaſt; and therefore a ſaint deſires a juſt competency as the *fitteſt*, becauſe the *freeſt* ſtate.

2. A gracious perſon deſires no more but a competency, becauſe there is moſt of God's love and care diſcovered in giving in our daily bread, by a daily providence. It is betwixt ſuch a condition, and a fulneſs of creature-proviſions in our land, as it was betwixt Egypt and Canaan; Egypt was watered with the foot from the river Nilus, and little of God was ſeen in that mercy; but Canaan depended upon the dews and ſhowers of heaven; and ſo every ſhower of rain was a refreſhing ſhower to their ſouls, as well as bodies. Moſt men that have a ſtock of creature-comforts in their hands, look upon all as coming in an ordinary, natural courſe, and ſee very little of God in their mercies. Pope Adrian built a college at Louvain, and cauſed this inſcription to be written in letters of gold on the gates thereof; *Trajectum plantavit, Louvanium rigavit, Cæſar dedit incrementum; (i. e.)* Utrecht planted me, Louvain watered me, and Cæſar gave the increaſe One to reprove his folly wrote underneath, *Hic Deus nihil fecit;* here God did nothing. Carnal men ſow, and reap, and eat, and look no further.

But now, when a man ſees his mercies come in by the ſpecial and aſſiduous care of God for him, there is a double ſweetneſs in thoſe mercies; the natural ſweetneſs which comes from the creature itſelf, every one, even the beaſts, can taſte that as well as thee; but beſides that, there is a ſpiritual ſweetneſs, far exceeding the former, which none but a believer taſtes; and much of that comes from the manner

in which he receives it, becauſe it comes (be it never ſo coarſe or little) as a covenant-mercy to him. " He hath given bread to them " that fear him, he is ever mindful of his covenant," Pſal. cxi. 5. Luther, who made many a meal upon a broiled herring, was wont to ſay, *Mendicato pane hic vivamus, annon hoc pulchre ſarcitur in eo, quod paſcimur pane cum angelis et vita æterna, Chriſto et ſacramentie:* Let us be content with coarſe fare here, have we not the bread that came down from heaven? Do we not feed with angels? A pregnant inſtance of the ſweetneſs of ſuch mercies is given us by a worthy divine of our own, Mr Iſaac Ambroſe, ' * For my own part (ſaith he) ' however the Lord hath ſeen cauſe to give me but a poor pittance of ' outward things, for which I bleſs his name, yet in the income ' thereof, I have many times obſerved ſo much of his peculiar provi- ' dence, that thereby they have been very much ſweetened, and my ' heart hath been raiſed to admire his grace. When of late under ' an hard diſpenſation (which I judge not meet to mention, wherein ' I ſuffered with inward peace conſcientiouſly) all ſtreams of wonted ' ſupplies being ſtopt, the waters of relief for myſelf and family did ' run low. I went to bed with ſome ſtaggerings and doubtings of ' the fountain's letting out itſelf for our refreſhing; but ere I did ' awake in the morning, a letter was brought to my bed-ſide, which ' was ſigned by a choice friend, Mr Anthony Aſh, which reported ' ſome unexpected breakings out of God's goodneſs for my comfort. ' Theſe are ſome of his lines,——Your God, who hath given you ' an heart thankfully to record your experiences of his goodneſs, doth ' renew experiences for your encouragement. Now I ſhall report ' one which will raiſe your ſpirit towards the God of your mercy, &c.' Whereupon he ſweetly concludes, ' One morſel of God's proviſion, ' (eſpecially if it come unexpected, and upon prayer, when wants are ' moſt) will be more ſweet to a ſpiritual reliſh, than all former full ' enjoyments were.'

Many mercies come unaſked for, and they require thankfulneſs, but when mercies come in upon prayer, and as a return of prayer, their ſweetneſs more than doubles; for now it is both God's bleſſing upon his own inſtitution, and a ſeal ſet to his promiſe at once, Pſal. lxvi. 16, 17. Doubtleſs Hannah found more comfort in her Samuel, and Leah in her Naphtali, the one being aſked of God, and the other wreſtled for with God, (as their names import) than mothers ordinarily do in their children.

### REFLECTIONS.

*The reflection of the deſigning hypocrite.*

Do the people of God deſire only ſo much of the creature as may fit them for the ſervice of God? What wretch am I that have deſired only ſo much of religion as may fit me to gain the creature! As

* Epiſtle to the Earl of Bedford; *ante ultima.*

God's people have ſubjected all their creature-enjoyments to religion, ſo appoſitely, O my ſoul, thou haſt ſubjected religion to thy worldly intereſt and deſigns. Inſtead of eating and drinking to ſerve God, I have ſerved God that I might eat and drink; yea, I have not only acted below religion, but below reaſon alſo; for reaſon dictates plainly, that the means muſt never be more excellent than the end. Wretch that I am, to make religion a ſlave to my luſt, a ſtirrup to advancement, an artifice to carry on my carnal deſigns; verily I have my reward; and this is all the good I am ever like to get by it.

*The worldling's reflection.*

And no leſs ſhould the worldling tremble, to conſider how he hath caſt off the duties of religion, made them ſtand aſide, and give place to the world. Inſtead of deſiring ſo much only as might make him ſerviceable to God, he thruſts aſide the ſervice of God to get as much of the world as he can, who is ſo far from making godlineſs the end of his creature-comforts, that he rather looks upon it as an obſtacle and hindrance to them. May not the very heathens make me bluſh? Could Ariſtotle deliver this as a true rule to poſterity, to make religion our firſt, and chief care? Could Ariſtippus ſay, He would rather neglect his means than his mind! his farm than his ſoul? Will the very Mahometans, how urgent ſoever their buſineſs be, lay it all aſide five times in the day to pray? Yea, is it common to a proverb among the very Papiſts, that maſs and meat hinder no man; and yet I, that profeſs myſelf a Chriſtian, thruſt out duty for every trifle! O wretched ſoul! how hath the god of this world blinded mine eyes? Can the world indeed do that for me that Chriſt can do: Hath it ever proved true to them that truſted it, and doated on it? Hath it not at laſt turned them off, as men turn off a ſumpter-horſe at night, that hath been a drudge to carry their gold and ſilver for them all day, and at laſt is turned out with an empty belly, and a galled back? O how righteous will that ſentence of God be! Go cry to the gods whom thou haſt ſerved.

*The gracious ſoul's reflection.*

And may not many gracious hearts turn in upon themſelves with ſhame and ſorrow, to conſider how unſatisfied they have been in that condition, that others have preferred and eſteemed as the greateſt of all outward mercies? I have indeed been fed with food convenient, but not contented? how hath mine heart been tortured from day to day with anxious thoughts, what I ſhall eat and drink, and wherewith I and mine ſhall be clothed? I pretend indeed that I care but for a competency of the world, but ſure I am, my cares about it have been incompetent. Come my diſtruſtful, earthly heart, let me propound a few queſtions to thee about this matter, and anſwer truly to what I ſhall demand of thee.

*Queſt.* 1. Haſt thou here a continuing city? Art thou at home, or upon thy journey, that thou art ſo ſolicitous about the world? Thy profeſſion indeed ſpeaks thee a ſtranger upon earth, but thy conver-

ſation a home-dweller. Eraſmus ſaid he deſired honours and riches no more than a weary horſe doth a heavy cloak-back. Wouldſt thou not account him a fool that would victual his ſhip as much to croſs the channel to France, as if ſhe were bound for the Eaſt Indies? Alas! it will be but a little while, and then there will be no more need of any of theſe things. It is ſad, that a ſoul which ſtands at the door of eternity, ſhould be perplexing itſelf about food and raiment.

*Queſt.* 2. Which of all the ſaints haſt thou known to be the better for much of the world? It hath been ſome men's utter ruin. Seldom doth God ſuffer men to be their own carvers, but they cut their own fingers. 'To give riches and pleaſure to an evil man (ſaith Ariſtotle) 'is but to give wine to one that hath a fever.' Where there is no *want*, there is uſually much *wantonneſs*. What a ſad ſtory is that of Pius Quintus. When I was in a low condition, ſaid he, I had ſome comfortable hopes of my ſalvation; but when I came to be a cardinal, I greatly doubted of it: But ſince I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Though this poor, undone wretch, ſpake it out, and others keep it in; yet, doubtleſs, he hath many thouſand fellows in the world that might ſay as much, would they but ſpeak the truth.

And even God's own people, though the world hath not excluded them out of heaven, yet it hath ſorely clogged them in the way thither. Many that have been very humble, holy, and heavenly in a low condition, have ſuffered a ſad ebb in a full condition. What a cold blaſt have they felt coming from the cares and delights of this life, to chill both their graces, and comforts! It had been well for ſome of God's people, if they had never known what proſperity meant.

*Queſt.* 3. Is not this a ſad ſymptom of a declining ſtate of ſoul, to be ſo hot, eager, and anxious about the ſuperfluous trifles of this life? Thinkeſt thou, O my ſoul! that one who walks in the views of that glory above, and maintains a converſation in heaven, can be much taken with theſe vanities? Do not the viſions of God veil the tempting ſplendour of the creature! It was the opinion of ſome of the Schoolmen, that the reaſon why Adam in paradiſe was not ſenſible of his nakedneſs, was becauſe he was wholly taken up in converſing with God. But this is certain, lively and ſweet communion with God, blunts and dulls the edge of the affections to earthly things; and canſt thou be ſatisfied, my ſoul, with ſuch gains as are attended with ſuch ſpiritual loſſes?

*Queſt.* 4. To conclude, is it not diſhonourable to God, and a juſtification of the way of the world for me, that profeſs myſelf a Chriſtian, to be as eager after riches as other men? "After all theſe things "do the nations ſeek," Matth. vi. 32. If I had no Father in heaven, nor promiſe in the world, it were another matter; but ſince my heavenly Father knows what I have need of, and hath charged me to be careful in nothing, but only to tell him my wants, Phil. iv. 6. how

unbecoming a thing is it in me to live and act as I have done! Let me henceforth learn to meaſure and eſtimate my condition, rather by its uſefulneſs to God, than its content and eaſe to my fleſh.

## THE POEM.

IF fruit and ſervice be indeed the end
To which my being and redemption tend,
Reaſon concludes that ſtate of all the reſt,
Which is moſt ſerviceable, to be beſt.
And ſuch a ſtate experience ſhews to lie
'Twixt fulneſs and a pinching poverty.
This golden *mean* is worth a golden *mine*;
He that hath this ſhould be aſham'd to whine.
The full-fed Chriſtian, like the ox i' th' ſtall,
Is no way fit to work, or plow withal.
And penury, like Pharaoh's leaner kine,
Devours the fatteſt portions of our time.
That man with whom this earthly pleaſure's found,
Or in whoſe heart thoſe anxious cares abound;
And yet can walk by ſcripture-rule, and line,
Will need a better head and heart than mine;
A ſingle ſtaff the traveller may find,
Of uſe and ſervice; but if you ſhould bind
A bundle of them to his back, they'll make
Him ſlack his pace and cry, my ſhoulders ach.
I am a traveller, this world's my way,
A ſingle ſtaff may be of uſe to ſtay
My feeble body, if it do not crack
By too hard leaning on it; but my back
Will bear no more: Alas! I ſoon ſhall tire,
And more than one I cannot well deſire.
Lord, to preſcribe to thee becomes me not,
I rather do ſubmit unto my lot.
But yet let condeſcending grace admit
Thy ſervant's ſuit this once, and this is it:
The ſtaff of bread convenient let me have,
And manage it diſcreetly; ſo, 'twill ſave
Thy feeble ſervant from the mire and dirt,
But more or leſs than this may do me hurt.
Or if thou ſay, thy ſervant ſhall have none,
Then ſtrengthen faith, that I may go alone.

## CHAP. V.

### Upon the Improvement of bad Ground.

*Spent barren land you can reſtore, and nouriſh:*
*Decayed Chriſtians God can cauſe to flouriſh.*

OBSERVATION.

WHERE land is ſpent out by tillage, or for want of manuring, the careful huſbandman hath many ways to recover and bring it in heart again. He lets it lie fallow, to give it reſt, and time to recover itſelf: carries out to his land, lime, and compoſt, to refreſh and quicken it again; and in paſture and meadow ground, will waſh it, (if poſſible) with a current of water, or the float of the ways after a fall of rain, which is to the earth as a ſpring of new blood to a conſumptive body. He cuts down and kills the weeds that ſuck it out, and cauſes them to make reſtitution of what they have purloined from it, by rotting upon the place where they grew. As careful are they to recover it, when it is ſpent, as an honeſt phyſician is of his patient in a languiſhing condition; for he knows his field will be as grateful to him, and fully requite his care and coſt.

APPLICATION.

AS man's, ſo God's huſbandry is ſometimes out of caſe, not by yielding too many crops, but too few. The myſtical huſbandman hath ſome fields, (I mean particular ſocieties and perſons, who were once fragrant and fruitful like a field) which God had bleſſed, but are now decayed and grown barren; whoſe gleanings formerly were more than their vintage now; the things that are in them are ready to die, Rev. iii. 3. It is poſſible, yea, too common for gracious ſouls to be reduced to a very low ebb, both of graces and comforts; how low I will not ſay. Our Britiſh divines tell us, that grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally loſt; but there may be an omiſſion of the act, though not an omiſſion of the habit: The act may be perverted, though the faith cannot be ſubverted; it may be ſhaken in, though not ſhaken out; Its fruits may fall, but its ſap lies hid in the root. They demerit the loſs of the kingdom, but loſe it not effectively; the effect of juſtification may be ſuſpended, but the ſtate of the juſtified cannot be diſſolved*.

Certain it is, one that, like Paul, hath been wrapped up with joy, even to the third heavens, and cried, "I am more than a conqueror,

* *Gratia nec totaliter intermittitur nec finaliter amittitur. Actus omittitur, habitus non amittitur. Actio pervertitur, fides non ſubvertitur. Concutitur, non excutitor. Defluit fructus, latet ſuccus. Jus ad regnum amittunt demeritorie, non effective. Effectus juſtificationis ſuſpenditur, at ſtatus juſtificati non diſſolvitur.*

" who ſhall ſeparate me from the love of Chriſt?" may, at another time lie mourning, as at the gates of death, crying, " O wretched " man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this " death?" One that hath walked in ſweet communion with God, ſunning himſelf in the light of his countenance, may afterwards " walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light," Iſa. l. 10. He that hath caſt anchor within the veil, and rode ſecurely in the peaceful harbour of aſſurance, may ſeem to feel his anchor of hope come home to him, and go a-drift into the ſtormy ocean again, crying with the church, Lam. iii. 18. " My hope is periſhed from the Lord." His calm and clear air may be overcaſt and clouded, yea, filled with ſtorms and tempeſts, lightnings and thunders; his graces, like under-ground flowers in the winter, may all diſappear and hide their beautiful heads.

To God he may ſay, I am caſt out of thy ſight. I know thou canſt do much, but wilt thou ſhew wonders to the dead?

To the promiſes he may ſay, you are ſweet things indeed, but what have I to do with you? I could once, indeed, rejoice in you, as my portion; but now I doubt I graſped a ſhadow, a fancy, inſtead of you.

To ſaints he may ſay, turn away from me, labour not to comfort me. O do not ſpill your precious ointment of conſolation upon my head; for what have I to do with comfort? To former *experiences*, he may ſay in his haſte, you are all lyars. To the *light of God's countenance*, he may ſay, farewel ſweet light, I ſhall behold thee no more. To Satan he may ſay, O mine enemy, thou haſt at laſt prevailed againſt me, thou art ſtronger than I, and haſt overcome. To *duties* and *ordinances*, he may ſay, Where is the ſweetneſs I once found in you? You were once ſweeter to me than the honey-comb; but now as taſteleſs as the white of an egg. O ſad relapſe! deplorable change! *quantum mutatus ab illo?*

But will God leave his poor creatures helpleſs, in ſuch a caſe as this? Shall their leaf fall, their branches wither, their joy, their life, their hearts depart? Will he ſee their graces fainting, their hopes gaſping, the new creature panting, the things that are in them ready to die, and will he not regard it? Yes; " there is hope of a " tree if it be cut down, and the root thereof wax old in the earth, " yet by the ſcent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a " plant, Job xiv. 8, 9 This poor declined ſoul, as ſad as it ſits at the gates of hell, may rouze up itſelf at laſt, and ſay to Satan, that ſtands triumphing over him, " Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy, " for though I fall, yet I ſhall ariſe; though I ſit in darkneſs, the " Lord ſhall be a light unto me," Micah vii. 8. He may raiſe up himſelf upon the bed of languiſhing for all this, and ſay to God, " Though thou haſt chaſtened me ſore, yet haſt thou not given me " over unto death." He may turn about to the ſaints that have mourned for him, and with a lightſome countenance ſay, " I ſhall

" not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." He may ſay to the *promiſes*, You are the true and faithful ſayings of God. My unbelief did bely you; I ſaid in my haſte you were lyars, but I eat my words, I am aſhamed of my folly. Surely, O ſoul, there is yet hope in thine end, thou mayeſt be reſtored, Pſal. xxiii. 3. Thou mayeſt yet recover thy verdure, and thy dew be as the dew of herbs. For,

1. Is he not thy father, and a father full of compaſſions, and bowels? And can a father ſtand by his dying child, ſee his fainting fits, hear his melting groans, and pity-begging looks, and not help him, eſpecially having reſtoratives by him, that can do it? Surely, " As a father pities his own children, ſo will thy God pity " thee," Pſal. ciii. 12, 13. " He will ſpare thee as a father ſpareth " his own ſon that ſerves him," Mal. iii. 17. Hark, how his bowels yearn! " I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf. Is not " Ephraim my dear ſon? Is he not a pleaſant child? For ſince I " ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill, I will ſurely " have mercy on him," Jer. xxxi. 20.

2. Doth he not know thy life would be altogether uſeleſs to him, if he ſhould not reſtore thee? What ſervice art thou fit to perform to him, in ſuch a condition? " Thy days will conſume like ſmoke, " whilſt thy heart is ſmitten and withered like graſs," Pſal. cii. 3, 4. Thy months will be months of vanity, they will fly away, and ſee no good, Job vii. 3. If he will but quicken thee again, then thou mayeſt call upon his name, Pſal. lxxx. 18. but in a dead and languiſhing condition, thou art no more fit for any work of God, than a ſick man is for manual labours; and ſurely he hath not put thoſe precious and excellent graces of his Spirit within thee for nothing; they were planted there for fruit and ſervice, and therefore, doubtleſs, he will revive thee again.

3. Yea, doſt thou not think he ſees thine inability to bear ſuch a condition long? He knows " thy ſpirit would fail before him, and the ſoul which he hath made;" Iſa. lvii. 16. David told him as much, in the like condition, Pſal. cxliii. 7, 8. " Hear me ſpeedily, " O Lord, for my ſpirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, leſt I " be like unto thoſe that go down into the pit:" q. d. Lord, make haſte, and recover my languiſhing ſoul; otherwiſe, whereas thou haſt now a *ſick child*, thou wilt ſhortly have a *dead child*.

And in like manner Job expoſtulated with him, Job vi. 1. 2, 3, 11, 12. " My grief is heavier than the ſand of the ſea, my words are " ſwallowed up, for the arrows of the Almighty are within me; and " the poiſon thereof drinks up my ſpirits: The terrors of God " do ſet themſelves in array againſt me. What is my ſtrength that " I ſhould hope? Is my ſtrength the ſtrength of ſtones? or are my " bones of braſs?" So chap. vii. 12. " Am I a ſea, or a whale?" &c. Other troubles a man may, but this he cannot bear, Prov. xviii. 14. and therefore, doubtleſs, ſeaſonable and gracious revivings will come,

" He will not ſtir up all his wrath, for he remembers thou art but " fleſh, a wind that paſſeth away, and cometh not again," Pſal. lxxvii. 38, 39. He hath ways enough to do it; if he do but unveil his bleſſed face, and make it ſhine again upon thee, thou art ſaved, Pſal. lxxx. 3. The manifeſtations of his love, will be to thy ſoul, as ſhowers to the parched graſs; thy ſoul, that now droops, and hangs the wing, ſhall then revive and leap for joy, Iſa. lxi. 1. a new face ſhall come upon thy graces, they ſhall bud again, and bloſſom as a roſe. If he do but ſend a ſpring of * auxiliary grace into thy ſoul, to actuate the dull habits of inherent grace, the work is done; then ſhalt thou return to thy firſt works, Rev. ii. 4, 5. and ſing, as in the days of thy youth.

REFLECTIONS.

O this is my very caſe, ſaith many a poor Chriſtian; thus my ſoul languiſhes and droops from day to day. It is good news indeed, that God both can and will reſtore my ſoul; but ſad that I ſhould fall into ſuch a ſtate; how unlike am I to what I once was! Surely, as the old men wept when they ſaw how ſhort the ſecond *temple* came of the glory of the firſt; ſo may I ſit down and weep bitterly, to conſider how much my firſt love and firſt duties excelled the preſent. For,

1. Is my heart ſo much in heaven now, as it was wont to be? Say, O my ſoul! doſt thou not remember, when, like the beloved diſciple, thou laidſt in Jeſus's boſom, how didſt thou ſweeten communion with him? How reſtleſs and impatient waſt thou in his abſence! divine withdrawments were to thee as the hell of hell; what a burden was the world to me in thoſe days! Had it not been for conſcience of my duty, I could have been willing to let all lie, that communion with Chriſt might ſuffer no interruption. When I awaked in the night, how was the darkneſs enlightened by the heavenly glimpſes of the countenance of my God upon me? How did his company ſhorten thoſe hours, and beguile the tediouſneſs of the night? O my ſoul, ſpeak thy experience; Is it now as it was then? No, thoſe days are paſt and gone, and thou art become much a ſtranger to that heavenly life. Art thou able with truth to deny this charge? When occaſionally I paſs by thoſe places, which were once to me as Jacob's Bethel to him; I ſigh at the remembrance of former paſſages betwixt me and heaven there, and ſay with Job, chap. xxix. " O that it were with me as in " months paſt, as in the days when God preſerved me, when his " candle ſhined upon my head, when by his light I walked through " darkneſs, when the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on " righteouſneſs, and it clothed me, when my glory was freſh in me!

*A convictive reflection.*



* Grace needs more grace to put it in exerciſe.

" When I remember theſe things my ſoul is poured out within me."

2. Is thy obedience to the commands of Chriſt, and motions to duty, as free and cheerful as they were wont to be? Call to mind, my ſoul, the times when thou waſt borne down the ſtream of love to every duty. If the Spirit did but whiſper to thee, ſaying, *Seek my face*, how did my ſpirit echo to his calls? ſaying, " Thy face, Lord, " will I ſeek," Pſal. xxvii. 8. If God had any work to be done, how readily did I offer my ſervice? Here am I, Lord, ſend me. My ſoul made me like the chariots of Amminadib; love oiled the wheels of my affections, and " his commandments were not grievous," 1 John v. 3. *Non tardat uncta rota.* There were no ſuch quarrelings with the command, no ſuch excuſes and delays as there are now. No, ſuch was my love to Chriſt, and delight to do his will, that I could no more keep back myſelf from duty, than a man that is carried away in a crowd.

Or, laſtly, tell me, O my ſoul, doſt thou bemoan thyſelf, or grieve ſo tenderly for ſin, and for grieving the Holy Spirit of God, as thou waſt wont to do? When formerly I had fallen by the hand of a temptation, how was I wont to lie in tears at the Lord's feet, bemoaning myſelf? How did I haſten to my cloſet, and there cry, like Ezra, chap. ix. 6. " O my God, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to look " up unto thee." How did I ſigh and weep before him, and, like Ephraim, ſmite upon my thigh, ſaying, " What have I done?" Ah my ſoul! how didſt thou work, ſtrive, and caſt about how to recover thyſelf again? Haſt thou forgotten how thou wouldſt ſometimes look up and ſigh bitterly? Ah! what a God have I provoked? what love and goodneſs have I abuſed? Sometimes look in, and weep, Ah! what motions did I withſtand? what a good Spirit have I grieved? Ah! my ſoul, thou wouldeſt have abhorred thyſelf, thou couldeſt never have borne it, had thine heart been as ſtupid, and as relentleſs then as now; if ever a poor ſoul had reaſon to diſſolve itſelf into tears for its ſad relapſes, I have.

2. But yet mourn not, O my ſoul, as one without hope. Remember, " There is hope in Iſrael concerning this " thing." As low as thy condition is, it is not deſperate, it is not a diſeaſe that ſcorns a remedy; many a man that hath been ſtretched out for dead, hath revived again, and lived many a comfortable day in the world; many a tree that hath caſt both leaf and fruit, by the ſkill of a prudent huſbandman, hath recovered again, and been made both flouriſhing and fruitful. Is it not eaſier, thinkeſt thou, to recover a languiſhing man to health, than a dead man to life? And yet this God did for me, Eph. ii. 1. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? " Though my " ſoul draw nigh to the pit, and my life to the deſtroyers, yet he " can ſend me a meſſenger, one among a thouſand, that ſhall declare " to me my uprightneſs; then ſhall he deliver me from going down " into the pit, my fleſh ſhall be freſher than a child's, and I ſhall re-

*A ſupporting reflection.*

« turn to the days of my youth," Job xxxiii. 22. Though my flouriſh, and much of my fruit too be gone, and I am a withering tree; yet as long as the root of the matter is in me, there is more hope of ſuch a poor, decayed, withered tree, than of the hypocrite that wants ſuch a root in all his glory and bravery. His ſun ſhall ſet, and never riſe again; but I live in expectation of a ſweet morning after this dark night.

Rouſe up, therefore, O my ſoul, ſet thy ſoul a work on Chriſt for quickening grace, for he hath life in himſelf, and quickens whomſoever he will, John vii. 38. Stir up that little which remains, Rev. iii. 2. haſt thou not ſeen lively flames proceed from glimmering and dying ſparks, when carefully collected and blown up? Get amongſt the moſt lively and quickening Chriſtians; « as iron ſharp-« ens iron, ſo will theſe ſet an edge upon thy dull affections," Prov. xxvii. 17. Acts xviii. 15. But, above all, cry mightily to the Lord for quickening; he will not deſpiſe thy cry. The moans of a diſtreſſed child work upon the bowels of a tender father. And be ſure to keep within thy view the great things of eternity, which are ready to be revealed; live in the believing and ſerious contemplations of them, and be dead if thou canſt. It is true, thou haſt reaſon enough from thy condition, to be for ever humbled, but no reaſon at all from thy God to be in the leaſt diſcouraged.

## THE POEM.

THOU art the Huſbandman, and I
A worthleſs plot of huſbandry,
Whom ſpecial love did, ne'ertheleſs,
Divide from nature's wilderneſs.
Then did the ſun-ſhine of thy face,
And ſweet illapſes of thy grace,
Like April ſhow'rs, and warming gleams,
Diſtil its dews, reflect its beams.
My dead affections then were green,
And hopeful buds on them were ſeen;
Theſe into duties ſoon were turn'd,
In which my heart within me burn'd.
O halcyon days! thrice happy ſtate!
Each place was Bethel, heaven's gate.
What ſweet diſcourſe, what heav'nly talk,
Whilſt with thee I did daily walk!
Mine eyes o'erflow, my heart doth ſink,
As oft as on thoſe days I think.
For ſtrangeneſs now is got between
My God and me, as may be ſeen
By what is now, and what was then:
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My fragrant branches blaſted be,
No fruits like thoſe that I can ſee.
Some canker-worm lies at my root,
Which fades my leaves, deſtroys my fruit.
My ſoul is baniſh'd from thy ſight,
For this it mourneth day and night.
Yet why doſt thou deſponding lie?
With Jonah caſt a backward eye.
Sure in thy God help may be had,
There's precious balm in Gilead.
That God that made me ſpring at firſt,
When I was barren and accurſt,
Can much more eaſily reſtore
My ſoul to what it was before;
'Twas Heman's, Job's, and David's caſe,
Yet all recover'd were by grace.
A word, a ſmile on my poor ſoul,
Will make it perfect, ſound, and whole.
A glance of thine hath ſoon diſſolv'd
A ſoul in ſin and grief involv'd.
Lord, if thou canſt not work the cure,
I am contented to endure.

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## CHAP. VI.

### Upon the incurableneſs of ſome bad Ground.

*No ſkill can mend the miry ground; and ſure*
*Some ſouls the goſpel leaves as paſt a cure.*

#### OBSERVATION.

ALTHOUGH the induſtry and ſkill of the huſbandman can make ſome ground that was uſeleſs and bad, good for tillage and paſture, and improve that which was barren; and by his coſt and pains make one acre worth ten: yet ſuch is the nature of ſome rocky or miry ground, where the water ſtands, and there is no way to cleanſe it, that it can never be made fruitful. The huſbandman is fain to let it alone, as an incurable piece of waſte or worthleſs ground; and though the ſun and clouds ſhed their influences on it, as well as upon better land, yet that doth not at all mend it. Nay, the more ſhowers it receives, the worſe it proves. For theſe do no way fecundate or improve it; nothing thrives there but worthleſs flags and ruſhes.

APPLICATION.

MANY alſo, there are, under the goſpel, who are given over by God to judicial blindneſs, hardneſs of heart, a reprobate ſenſe, and perpetual barrenneſs; ſo that how excellent ſoever the means are which they enjoy, and how efficacious ſoever to the converſion, edification, and ſalvation of others; yet they ſhall never do their ſouls good. Ezek. xlvii. 9, 11. "Every thing whereſoever the "river comes ſhall live, but the miry places thereof, and the marſhes "thereof ſhall never be healed, but be given to ſalt;" i. e. given to an obſtinate and everlaſting barrenneſs. Compare Deut. ix. 23. By theſe waters, ſaith the judicious Mr Strong*, underſtand the doctrine of the goſpel; as Rev. xxi. 2. a river of water of life, clear as cryſtal: *Hic fluvius eſt uberrima doctrina Chriſti*, ſaith Mr Brightman. This river is the moſt fruitful doctrine of Chriſt; yet theſe waters do not heal the miry, marſhy places; i. e. men that live unfruitfully under ordinances, who are compared to miry, marſhy places, in three reſpects:

(1.) In miry places the water hath not free paſſage, but ſtands and ſettles there. So it is with theſe barren ſouls; therefore the apoſtle prays, that the goſpel may run, and be glorified, 2 Theſ. iii. 1. The word is ſaid to run, when it meets with no ſtop, *Cum libere propagatur*, when it is freely propagated, and runs through the whole man; when it meets with no ſtop, either in the mouth of the ſpeaker, or hearts of the hearers, as it doth in theſe.

(2.) In a miry place the earth and water are mixed together; this mixture makes mire. So when the truths of God do mix with the corruptions of men, that they either hold ſome truths, and yet live in their luſts; or elſe when men do make uſe of the truths of God to juſtify and plead for their ſins. Or,

(3.) When, as in a miry place, the longer the water ſtands in it, the worſe it grows; ſo the longer men abide under ordinances, the more filthy and polluted they grow. Theſe are the miry places that cannot be healed, their diſeaſe is incurable, deſperate.

O this is a ſad caſe! and yet very common; many perſons are thus given over as incorrigible, and hopeleſs; Rev. xxii. 11. "Let him "that is filthy be filthy ſtill." Jer. vi. 29. "Reprobate ſilver ſhall "men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them." Iſa. vi. 10, 11. "Go make the heart of this people fat, their ears dull," &c.

Chriſt executes, by the goſpel, that curſe upon many ſouls, which he denounced againſt the fig-tree, Mat. xxi. 19. "Let no fruit grow "on thee henceforth for ever; and immediately the fig-tree wither-"ed away." To be given up to ſuch a condition, is a fearful judgment indeed, a curſe with a witneſs; the ſum of all plagues, miſeries, and judgments, a fatal ſtroke at the root itſelf. It is a woe to have

* Spiritual barrenneſs, p. 8.

a bad heart, (ſaith one) but it is the depth of woe to have a heart that never ſhall be made better. To be barren under the goſpel, is a ſore judgment, but to have that *pertinax ſterilitas*, a pertinacious barrenneſs; this is to be twice dead, and plucked up by the root, as Jude ſpeaks.

And to ſhew you the woful and miſerable ſtate and plight of ſuch men, let the following particulars be weighed.

(1.) It is a ſtroke at the ſoul itſelf, an inward ſpiritual judgment; and by how much the more inward and ſpiritual any judgment is, by ſo much the more dreadful and lamentable. As ſoul-mercies are the beſt mercies, ſo ſoul-judgments are the ſaddeſt of all judgments. If it were but a temporal ſtroke upon the body, the loſs of an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, though in itſelf it would be a conſiderable loſs, yet it were nothing to this. *Omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, ſaith Chryſoſtom, ſpeaking of bodily members; God hath given men double members, two eyes, if one be loſt, the other ſupplies its want; two hands, two ears, two feet, that the failing of one may be ſupplied by the help of the other: *animam vero unam*, but one ſoul; if that periſh, there is no other to ſupply its loſs. "The ſoul, ſaith a "heathen*, is the man; that which is ſeen, is not the man." The apoſtle calls the body a vile body, Phil. iii. 21. and ſo it is, compared with the ſoul; and Daniel calls it the ſheath, which is but a contemptible thing to the ſword which is in it. Oh! it were far better that many bodies periſh, than one ſoul; that every member were made the ſeat and ſubject of the moſt exquiſite torture, than ſuch a judgment ſhould fall upon the ſoul.

(2.) It is the ſevereſt ſtroke God can inflict upon the ſoul in this life to give it up to barrenneſs; becauſe it cuts off all hopes, fruſtrates all means, nothing can be a bleſſing to him. If one comes from the dead, if angels ſhould deſcend from heaven to preach to him, there is no hope of him. If God ſhut up a man, who can open? Job xii. 14. As there was none found in heaven or earth that could open the ſeals of that book, Rev. v. 5. ſo is there no opening by the hand of the moſt able and ſkilful miniſtry, thoſe ſeals of hardneſs, blindneſs, and unbelief, thus impreſſed upon the ſpirit. Whom juſtice ſo locks up, mercy will never let out. This is that which makes up the *Anathema Maranatha*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. which is the dreadfuleſt curſe in all the book of God, accurſed till the Lord come.

(3.) It is the moſt indiſcernable ſtroke to themſelves that can be, and by that ſo much the more deſperate. Hence there is ſaid to be poured out upon them the ſpirit of ſlumber, Iſa. xxix. 10. "The "Lord hath poured out up you the ſpirit of deep ſleep, and hath "cloſed your eyes." Montanus renders it, The Lord hath mingled upon you the ſpirit of deep ſleep. And ſo it is an alluſion to a ſoporiferous medicine mingled, and made up of opium, and ſuch-like

* Ουκ εστιν ανθρωπος το ορωμενον. Plato.

ſtupefactive ingredients, which caſts a man into ſuch a deep ſleep, that do what you will to him, he feels, he knows it not. "Make "their eyes heavy, and their ears dull; leſt they ſhould ſee, and "hear, and be converted," Iſa. vi. 9, 10. This is the heart that cannot repent, which is ſpoken of, Rom. ii. 5. For men are not ſenſible at all of this judgment, they do not in the leaſt ſuſpect it, and that is their miſery. Though they be curſed trees, which ſhall never bear any fruit to life, yet many times they bear abundance of other fair and pleaſant fruits to the eye, excellent gifts, and rare endowments; and theſe deceive and undo them. Mat. vii. 22. "We have pro- "pheſied in thy name;" this makes the wound deſperate, that there is no finding of it, no probe to ſearch it.

(4.) It is a ſtroke that cuts off from the ſoul all the comforts and ſweetneſs of religion. A man may pray, hear, and confer, but all thoſe duties are dry ſtalks to him, which yield no meat, no ſolid ſubſtantial nutriment; ſome common touches upon the affections he may ſometimes find in duty, the melting voice or rhetoric of the preacher may perhaps ſtrike his natural affections, as another tragical ſtory pathetically delivered may do; but to have any real communion with God in ordinances, any diſcoveries or views of the beauty of the Lord in them, that he cannot have; for theſe are the ſpecial effects and operations of the Spirit, which are always reſtrained.

God hath ſaid to ſuch as he did to them, Gen. vi. 3. "My "Spirit ſhall no longer ſtrive with them;" and then what ſweetneſs is there in ordinances? What is the word, ſeparated from the Spirit, but a dead letter? It is the Spirit that quickens, 2 Cor. iii. 2. Friend, thou muſt know that the goſpel works not like *a natural cauſe* upon thoſe that hear it; if ſo, the effect would always follow, unleſs miraculouſly ſtopt and hindered; but it works like *a moral inſtituted cauſe*, whoſe efficacy and ſucceſs depend upon the arbitrary concurrence of the Spirit with it. "The wind blows where it liſt- "eth, ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8. "Of "his own will begat he us by the word of truth." Ordinances are as the pool of Bethesda, which had his healing virtue only when the *angel* moved the waters; but the Spirit never moves ſavingly upon the waters of ordinances, for its healing of their ſouls, how many years ſoever they lie by them; though others feel a divine power in them, yet they ſhall not. As the men that travelled with Paul, when Chriſt appeared to him from heaven, they ſaw the light, but heard not the voice which he heard to ſalvation: So it was with theſe; they ſee the miniſters, hear the words, which are words of ſalvation to others, but not ſo to them. Concerning theſe miſerable ſouls, we may ſigh, and ſay to Chriſt, as Martha did concerning her brother Lazarus: Lord, if thou hadſt been here, in this ſermon, or in this prayer, this ſoul had not remained dead. But here is the woe that lies upon him, God is departed from the means and none can help him.

(5.) It is ſuch a ſtroke upon the ſpirit of man, as is a fearful ſign of his eternal reprobation. It is true, we cannot poſitively ſay of a man in this life, he is a reprobate, one that God will never ſhew mercy to; but yet there are ſome probable marks of it upon ſome men in this world, and they are of a trembling conſideration wherever they appear; of which this is one of the ſaddeſt. 2 Cor. iv. 3. "If "our goſpel be hid, it is hid to thoſe that are loſt, in whom the god "of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not; "leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of "God, ſhould ſhine unto them." So Acts xiii. 48. "As many as "were ordained unto eternal life believed. Ye believe not, becauſe "ye are not of my ſheep," John x. 26. And again, Matth. xiii. 11. "To you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom, but to "them it is not given." There cannot be a more dreadful character of a perſon marked out for wrath, than to continue under the ordinances, as the rocks and miry places do under the natural influences of heaven. What bleſſed opportunities had Judas? He was under Chriſt's own miniſtry, he often heard the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; he was day and night in his company, yet never the better; and why? Becauſe he was the *ſon of perdition*, that is, a man appointed to deſtruction and wrath.

(6.) And laſtly, To add no more. It is ſuch a ſtroke of God upon the ſouls of men, as immediately fore-runs hell and damnation, Heb. vi. 8. "But which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is "nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burnt." So that look as ſome ſaints in this world have had a prelibation or foretaſte of heaven, which the ſcripture calls *the earneſt of the Spirit*; ſo this is a precurſor of hell, a ſign of wrath at the door. We may ſay of it as it is ſaid of the pale horſe in the Revelation, that hell follows it. "If a "man abide not in me, (ſaith Chriſt, John xv. 6.) he is caſt forth as "a branch, and withered;" which is the very ſtate of theſe barren, curſed ſouls. And what follows? Why, ſaith he, men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned. Lo, this is the vengeance which the goſpel executes upon this barren ground.

REFLECTIONS.

*The ſincere ſoul's reflection.*

1. Well then, bleſſed be God that made me feel the ſaving power of the goſpel. O, let God be exalted for ever for this mercy! that how defective ſoever I am in common gifts, though I have a dull underſtanding, a leaking memory, a ſtammering tongue; yet I have felt, and do feel the power of the goſpel upon my heart. I bleſs thee (my God) that although I labour under many ſpiritual infirmities, yet I am not ſick of this incurable diſeaſe. I have given thee indeed juſt cauſe to inflict and execute this dreadful curſe upon me alſo, but thou haſt not dealt with me after my deſerts, but ac-

cording to the riches of thy mercy. Some little fruit I bring forth, and what it is, is by virtue of my union with Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. vii. 4. And this hath more in it as to my comfort, than all the glittering gifts and ſplendid performances of the moſt glorious hypocrite can yield to him: if I might have my choice (ſaith one) I would chuſe and prefer the moſt deſpicable and ſordid work of a ruſtic Chriſtian, before all the victories of Alexander, and triumphs of Cæſar. *Bleſſed therefore be the Lord, who hath abounded unto me in all ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.*

I cannot remember a ſermon as another can, but bleſſed be God, that I am able to favour it, and feel it; that I have an heart to love, and a will to obey all that God diſcovers to be my duty.

*The formal profeſſor's reflection.*

2. O, then how little cauſe have I to make my boaſt of ordinances, and glory in my external privileges, who never bear ſpiritual fruit under them? If I well conſider my condition, there is matter of *trembling*, and not of *glorying* in theſe things. It may be while I have been glorying in them, and lifting up my ſecure heart upon them, the Lord hath been ſecretly blaſting my ſoul under them, and inſenſibly executing this horrible curſe by them. Shall I boaſt with Capernaum that *I am lifted up to heaven*, ſince I may with her, at laſt be caſt down to hell? And if ſo, Lord, what a hell will my hell be? It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for me. It drew tears from the eyes of Chriſt, when he was looking upon Jeruſalem, under the ſame conſideration that I doubt I have cauſe to look upon my own ſoul, Luke xix. 41. "He wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, "even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong to thy "peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." So long have I been a hearer, a profeſſor of the goſpel, ſo many years have I enjoyed its diſtinguiſhing ordinances, but have they not been all dry and empty things to me; hath not the ſpirit of formality acted me in them? Have not ſelf-ends and worldly reſpects lain at the bottom of my beſt duties? Have not my diſcourſes, in communion with ſaints been trade words, ſpeaking what I have learnt, but not felt? Sad is my condition now, but it would be deſperate and irrecoverable ſhouldſt thou execute this curſe upon me.

*The leſs fruitful Chriſtian's reflection.*

3. And what may I think of my condition? Lord, I acknowledge my unprofitableneſs under the means hath been ſhameful; and this hath made my condition doubtful. I have often trembled for fear, leſt my root had been blaſted by ſuch a curſe; but if ſo, whence is this trembling? Whence theſe fears and ſorrows about it? Doth ſuch fruit grow in that ſoil which thou haſt curſed? I am told but now, that on whom this judgment falls, to them thou giveſt an heart that cannot repent. Lord, I bleſs thee for theſe evidences of freedom from the curſe; for the fruits of fear, ſorrow, and holy jealouſy.

* The laws of men ſpare for the fruit's ſake, and wilt thou not ſpare me alſo, my God, if there be found in me a bleſſing in the bud, Iſa. lxv. 8.

4. To conclude, what a ſerious reflection ſhould this occaſion in every diſpenſer of the goſpel? How ſhould he ſay when he goes to preach the goſpel, I am going to preach that word which is to be *a ſavour of life or death unto theſe ſouls*; upon how many of my poor hearers may the curſe of perpetual barrenneſs be executed this day! O how ſhould ſuch a thought melt his heart into compaſſion over them, and make him beg hard, and plead earneſtly with God for a better iſſue of the goſpel than this upon them. *The goſpel-preacher's reflections.*

## THE POEM.

YOU that beſides your pleaſant fruitful fields,
Have uſeleſs bogs, and rocky ground that yields
You no advantage, nor doth quit your coſt,
But all your pains and charges on them's loſt:
Hearken to me, I'll teach you how to get
More profit by them than if they were ſet
At higher rents than what your tenants pay
For your moſt fertile lands; and here's the way.
Think when you view them, why the Lord hath choſe
Theſe, as the emblem to decipher thoſe
That under goſpel-grace grow worſe and worſe;
For means are fruitleſs when the Lord doth curſe.
Sweet ſhowers deſcend, the ſun his beams reflects
On both alike, but not with like effects.
Obſerve and ſee how after the ſweet ſhowers
The graſs and corn revive; the fragrant flowers
Shoot forth their beauteous heads, the vallies ſing,
All freſh and green as in the verdant ſpring.
But rocks are barren ſtill, and bogs are ſo;
Where nought but flags, and worthleſs ruſhes grow.
Upon theſe marſhy grounds there lies this curſe,
The more rain falls, by ſo much more the worſe.
Even ſo the dews of grace that ſweetly fall,
From goſpel-clouds, are not alike to all.
The gracious ſoul doth germinate and bud,
But to the reprobate it doth no good.
He's like the wither'd fig-tree, void of fruit;
A fearful curſe hath ſmote his very root.
The heart's made fat, the eyes with blindneſs ſeal'd;
The piercing'ſt truths the goſpel e'er reveal'd,

* The Roman laws defer puniſhing a woman with child. *Chryſ.*

Shall be to him but as the ſun and rain
Are to obdurate rocks, fruitleſs and vain.
Be this your meditation when you walk
By rocks and fenny-grounds thus learn to talk
With your own ſouls; and let it make you fear
Leſt that's your caſe that is deſcribed here.
This is the beſt improvement you can make
Of ſuch bad ground; good ſoul I pray thee take
Some pains about them; though they barren be,
Thou ſeeſt how they may yield ſweet fruits to thee.

## CHAP. VII.

### Upon the plowing of Corn-land.

*The plowman guides his plow with care and ſkill;*
*So doth the Spirit in ſound conviction ſtill.*

#### OBSERVATION.

IT requires not only ſtrength, but much ſkill and judgment, to manage and guide the plow. The Hebrew word חרש which we tranſlate to plow, ſignifies to be intent, as an artificer is about ſome curious piece of work. The plow muſt neither go too ſhallow, nor too deep in the earth; it muſt not indent the ground, by making crooked furrows, nor leap and make baulks in the good ground; but be guided as to a juſt depth of earth, ſo to caſt the furrow in a ſtraight line, that the floor or ſurface of the field may be made plain, as it is Iſa. xxxviii. 25. And hence that expreſſion, Luke ix. 62. "He that "puts his hand to the plow, and looks back, is not fit for the king-"dom of heaven." The meaning is, that as he that plows muſt have his eyes always forward, to guide and direct his hand in caſting the furrows ſtraight and even; (for his hand will be quickly out when his eye is off;) ſo he that heartily reſolves for heaven, muſt addict himſelf wholly and intently to the buſineſs of religion, and not have his mind entangled with the things of this world, which he hath left behind him; whereby it appears, that the right management of the plow requires as much ſkill as ſtrength.

#### APPLICATION.

THIS obſervation in nature ſerves excellently to ſhadow forth this propoſition in divinity; that the work of the Spirit in convincing and humbling the heart of a ſinner, is a work wherein

much of the wiſdom, as well as power of God, is diſcovered. The work of repentance, and ſaving contrition, is ſet forth in ſcripture by this metaphor of plowing*, Jer. iv. 3. Hoſ. x. 12. "Plow up your "fallow ground;" that is, be convinced, humbled, and broken-hearted for ſin. And the reſemblance betwixt both theſe works appears in the following particulars.

(1.) It is a hard and difficult work to plow, it is reckoned one of the painfulleſt manual labours; it is alſo a very hard thing to convince and humble the heart of a ſecure, ſtout, and proud ſinner, indurate in wickedneſs. What Luther ſaith of a dejected ſoul, 'That 'it is as eaſy to raiſe the dead, as to comfort ſuch a one.' The ſame I may ſay of the ſecure, confident ſinner; it is as eaſy to rend the rocks, as to work ſaving contrition upon ſuch a heart, *Citius ex pumice aquam;* all the melting language, and earneſt entreaties of the goſpel, cannot urge ſuch a heart to ſhed a tear: Therefore it is called a heart of ſtone, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. a firm rock, Amos vi. 12. "Shall horſes run upon the rock? Will one plow there with oxen?" Yet when the Lord comes in the power of his Spirit, theſe rocks do rend, and yield to the power of the word.

(2.) The plow pierces deep into the boſom of the earth, makes, as it were, a deep gaſh or wound in the heart of it. So doth the Spirit upon the hearts of ſinners, he pierces their very ſouls by conviction. Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this they were pricked, (or* "pierced point blank) to the heart." "Then the word divides the "ſoul and ſpirit," Heb. iv. 12. It comes upon the conſcience with ſuch piercing dilemmas, and tilts the ſword of conviction ſo deep into their ſouls, that there is no ſtanching the blood, no healing this wound, till Chriſt himſelf come, and undertake the cure. *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo;* this barbed arrow cannot be pulled out of their hearts by any, but the hand that ſhot it in. Diſcourſe with ſuch a ſoul about his troubles, and he will tell you, that all the ſorrows that ever he had in this world, loſs of eſtate, health, children, or whatever elſe, are but flea-bitings to this; this ſwallows up all other troubles. See how that Chriſtian Niobe, Luke vii. 38. is diſſolved into tears; "Now deep calleth unto deep at the noiſe of his water-ſpouts, "when the waves and billows of God go over the ſoul." Spiritual ſorrows are deep waters, in which the ſtouteſt and moſt magnanimous ſoul would ſink and drown, did not Jeſus Chriſt, by a ſecret and ſupporting hand, hold it up, and preſerve it.

(3.) The plow rends the earth in parts and pieces, which before was united, and makes thoſe parts hang looſe, which formerly lay cloſe. Thus doth the Spirit of conviction rend aſunder the heart and its moſt beloved luſts. Joel ii. 13. "Rend your hearts, and not your "garments." That is, rather than your garments; for the ſenſe is

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* *Gloſſius Rhet. Sacra, p.* 300.

† Κατενυγησαν, *punctim cedo, pungendo penetro.*

comparative, though the expreſſion be negative. And this renting implies not only acute pain, fleſh cannot be rent aſunder without anguiſh, nor yet only force and violence; the heart is a ſtubborn and knotty piece, and will not eaſily yield; but it alſo implies a diſunion of parts united. As when a garment, or the earth, or any contiguous body is rent, thoſe parts are ſeparated which formerly cleaved together. Sin and the ſoul were glewed faſt together before, there was no parting of them, they would as ſoon part with their lives as with their luſts; but now when the heart is rent from them truly, it is alſo rent from them everlaſtingly, Ezek. vii. 15, to 19.

(4.) The plow turns up and diſcovers ſuch things as lay hid in the boſom of the earth before, and were covered under a fair green ſurface, from the eyes of men. Thus when the Lord plows up the heart of a ſinner by conviction, then the ſecrets of his heart are made manifeſt, 2 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. the moſt ſecret and ſhameful ſins will then out; for "the word of God is quick and powerful, ſharper than any "two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing of the ſoul and "ſpirit, the joints and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts "and ſecret intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12. It makes the fire burn inwardly, ſo that the ſoul hath no reſt till confeſſion give a vent to trouble. Fain would the ſhuffling ſinner conceal and hide his ſhame, but the word follows him through all his ſinful ſhifts, and brings him at laſt to be his own, both accuſer, witneſs, and judge.

(5.) The work of the plow is but *opus ordinabile*, a preparative work in order to fruit. Should the huſbandman plow his ground ever ſo often, yet if the ſeed be not caſt in, and quickened, in vain is the harveſt expected. Thus conviction alſo is but a preparative to a farther work upon the ſoul of a ſinner; if it ſtick there, and goes no farther, it proves but an abortive, or untimely birth. Many have gone thus far, and there they have ſtuck; they have been like a field plowed, but not ſowed, which is a matter of trembling conſideration; for hereby their ſin is greatly aggravated, and their eternal miſery ſo much the more increaſed. O when a poor damned creature ſhall with horror reflect upon himſelf in hell, How near was I once, under ſuch a ſermon, to converſion! my ſins were ſet in order before me, my conſcience awakened, and terrified me with the guilt of them: many purpoſes and reſolves I had then to turn to God, which had they been perfected by anſwerable executions, I had never come to this place of torment; but there I ſtuck, and that was my eternal undoing. Many ſouls have I known ſo terrified with the guilt of ſin, that they have come roaring under horrors of conſcience to the preacher; ſo that one would think ſuch a breach had been made betwixt them and ſin, as could never be reconciled; and yet as angry as they were in that fit with ſin, they have hugged and embraced it again.

(6.) It is beſt plowing when the earth is prepared and mollified by

the ſhowers of rain; then the work goes on ſweetly and eaſily, and never doth the heart ſo kindly melt, as when the goſpel-clouds diſſolve, and the free grace and love of Jeſus Chriſt comes ſweetly ſhowering down upon it; then it relents and mourns ingenuouſly, Ezek. xvi. 63. "That thou mayeſt remember, and be confounded, "and never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy ſhame, when "I am pacified towards thee for all that thou haſt done." So it was with that poor penitent, Luke vii. 38. when the Lord Jeſus had diſcovered to her the ſuperabounding riches of his grace, in the pardon of her manifold abominations, her heart melted within her, ſhe waſhed the feet of Chriſt with tears. And indeed, there is as much difference betwixt the tears which are forced by the terrors of the law, and thoſe which are extracted by the grace of the goſpel, as there is betwixt thoſe of a condemned malefactor, who weeps to conſider the miſery he is under, and thoſe of a pardoned malefactor, that receives his pardon at the foot of the ladder, and is melted by the mercy and clemency of his gracious prince towards him.

(7.) The plow kills thoſe rank weeds which grow in the field, turns them up by the roots, buries and rots them. So doth ſaving conviction kill ſin at the root, makes the ſoul ſick of it, begets indignation in the heart againſt it, 2 Cor. vii. 11. The word Ἀγανακτησιν, there ſignifies the riſing of the ſtomach, and being angry even unto ſickneſs; religious wrath is the fierceſt wrath, now the ſoul cannot endure ſin, it trembles at it. "I find a woman more "bitter than death," (ſaith penitent Solomon) Eccl. vii. 26. Conviction, like a ſurfeit, makes the ſoul to lothe what it formerly loved and delighted in.

(8.) That field is not well plowed, where the plow jumps and ſkips over good ground and makes baulks, it muſt run up the whole field alike; and that heart is not ſavingly convicted, where any luſt is ſpared, and left untouched. Saving conviction extends itſelf to all ſins, not only to ſin in general, with this cold confeſſion, *I am a ſinner;* but to the particulars of ſin, yea, to the particular circumſtances and aggravations of time, place, manner, occaſions, thus and thus have I done; to the ſin of nature, as well as practice. "Behold I "was ſhapen in iniquity," Pſal. li. 5. There muſt be no bauking of any ſin; the ſparing of one ſin, is a ſure argument that thou art not truly humbled for any ſin. So far is the convinced ſoul from a ſtudious concealment of a beloved ſin, that it weeps over that more than over any other actual ſin.

(9.) New ground is much more eaſily plowed, than that which by long lying out of tillage is more conſolidated, and clung together, by deep-rooted thorns and brambles, which render it difficult to the plowman. This old ground is like an old ſinner, that hath lain a long time hardening under the means of grace. O the difficulty of convincing ſuch a perſon! ſin hath got ſuch rooting in his heart, he is ſo habituated to the reproofs and calls of the word, that few ſuch

are wrought upon. How many young perſons are called to one obdurate, inveterate ſinner? I do not ſay but God may call home ſuch a ſoul at the eleventh hour, but I may ſay of theſe, compared with others, as Solomon ſpeaks, Eccl. vii. 28. "One man among a thou-"ſand have I found," &c. Few that have long reſiſted the goſpel, that come afterwards to feel the ſaving efficacy thereof.

REFLECTIONS.

*The true convert's reflection.*

1. O grace, for ever to be admired! that God ſhould ſend forth his word and Spirit to plow up my hard and ſtony heart! yea, mine, when he hath left ſo many of more tender, ingenuous, ſweet, and melting tempers without any culture or means of grace. O bleſſed goſpel, heart-diſſolving voice! I have felt thine efficacy, I have experienced thy divine and irreſiſtible power; thou art indeed ſharper than any two-edged ſword, and woundeſt to the heart; but thy wounds are the wounds of a friend: All the wounds thou haſt made in my ſoul, were ſo many doors opened to let in Chriſt: all the blows thou gaveſt my conſcience, were but to beat off my ſoul from ſin, which I embraced, and had retained to my everlaſting ruin, hadſt thou not ſeparated them and me. O wiſe and merciful Phyſician! thou didſt indeed bind me with cords of conviction and ſorrow, but it was only to cut out that ſtone in my heart, which had killed me if it had continued there. O how did I ſtruggle and oppoſe thee, as if thou hadſt come with the ſword of an enemy, rather than the lance and probe of a ſkilful and tender-hearted phyſician? Bleſſed be the day wherein my ſin was diſcovered and embittered! O happy ſorrows, which prepared for ſuch matchleſs joys! O bleſſed hand, which turned my ſalt waters into pleaſant wine! and after many pangs and ſorrows of ſoul, didſt, at length, bring forth deliverance and peace.

*The ſtubborn heart's reflection.*

2. But O what a rock of adamant is this heart of mine! that never yet was wounded, and ſavingly pierced for ſin by the terrors of the law, or melting voice of the goſpel! long have I ſat under the word, but when did I feel a relenting pang? O my ſoul! my ſtupified ſoul! thou haſt got an antidote againſt repentance, but haſt thou any againſt hell? Thou canſt keep out the ſenſe of ſin now, but art thou able to keep out the terrors of the Lord hereafter? If thou couldſt turn a deaf ear to the ſentence of Chriſt in the day of judgment, as eaſily as thou doſt to the entreaties of Chriſt in the day of grace, it were ſomewhat; but ſurely there is no defence againſt that. Ah! fool that I am, to quench theſe convictions, unleſs I knew how to quench thoſe flames they warn me of.

*The miſcarrying ſoul's reflection.*

3. And may not I challenge the firſt place among all the mourners in the world, who have all loſt thoſe convictions which at ſeveral times came upon me under the word? I have been often awa-

kened by it, and filled with terrors and tremblings under it; but thoſe troubles have ſoon worn off again, and my heart (like water removed from the fire) returned to its native coldneſs. Lord! what a diſmal caſe am I in! many convictions have I choaked and ſtrangled, which, it may be, ſhall never more be revived, until thou revive them againſt me in judgment. I have been in pangs, and brought forth nothing but wind; my troubles have wrought no deliverance, neither have my luſts fallen before them? My conſcience, indeed, hath been ſometimes ſick with ſin, yea, ſo ſick as to vomit them up by an external, partial reformation; but then, with the dog, have I turned again to my vomit, and now I doubt I am given over to an heart that cannot repent. O that theſe travelling pangs could be quickened again! but alas! they are ceaſed. I am like a priſoner eſcaped, and again recovered, whom the gaoler loads with double irons. Surely, O my ſoul! if thy ſpiritual troubles return not again, they are but gone back to bring eternal troubles. It is with thee, O my ſoul! as with a man whoſe bones have been broken, and not well ſet; who muſt, (how terrible ſoever it appear to him) endure the pain of breaking and ſetting them again, if ever he be made a ſound man. O that I might rather chuſe to be the object of thy wounding mercy, than of thy ſparing cruelty! if thou plow not up my heart again by compunction, I know it muſt be rent in pieces at laſt by deſperation.

## THE POEM.

THERE's ſkill in plowing, that the plowman knows,
For if too ſhallow, or too deep he goes,
The ſeed is either bury'd, or elſe may
To rooks and daws become an eaſy prey.
This, as a lively emblem, fitly may
Deſcribe the bleſſed Spirit's work and way:
Whoſe work on ſouls, with this doth ſymbolize;
Betwixt them both, thus the reſemblance lies.
Souls are the ſoil, conviction is the plow,
God's workmen draw, the Spirit ſhews them how.
He guides the work, and in good ground doth bleſs
His workmen's pains, with ſweet and fair ſucceſs.
The heart prepar'd, he ſcatters in the ſeed,
Which in its ſeaſon ſprings, no fowl nor weed
Shall pick it up, or choak this ſpringing corn,
'Till it be houſed in the heavenly barn.
When thus the Spirit plows up the fallow ground,
When with ſuch fruits his ſervant's work is crown'd;
Let all the friends of Chriſt, and ſouls ſay now,
As they paſs by the fields, *God ſpeed the plow.*
Sometimes this plow thin ſhelfy ground doth turn,
That little ſeed which ſprings, the ſun-beams burn.

The reſt uncover'd lies, which fowls devour.
Alas! their heart was touch'd, but not with pow'r.
The cares and pleaſures of this world have drown'd
The ſeed before it peep'd above the ground.
Some ſprings indeed, the Scripture ſaith that ſome
Do taſte the powers of the world to come.
Theſe embrios never come to timely birth,
Becauſe the ſeed that's ſown wants depth of earth.
Turn up, O God, the bottom of my heart;
And to the ſeed that's ſown, do thou impart
Thy choiceſt bleſſing. Though I weep and mourn
In this wet ſeed-time, if I may return
With ſheaves of joy; theſe fully will reward
My pains and ſorrows, be they ne'er ſo hard.

## CHAP. VIII.

### Upon the Seed-Corn.

*The choiceſt wheat is ſtill reſerv'd for ſeed,*
*But gracious principles are choice indeed.*

#### OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN are very careful and curious about their ſeed-corn, that it may not only be clean and pure, but the beſt and moſt excellent of its kind. Iſa. xxviii. 25. "He caſteth in the prin-"cipal wheat." If any be more full and weighty than other, that is reſerved for ſeed. It is uſual with huſbandmen to pick and leaſe their ſeed-corn by hand, that they may ſeparate the cockel and darnel, and all the lighter and hollow grains from it, wherein they manifeſt their diſcretion; for, according to the vigour and goodneſs of the ſeed, the fruit and production are like to be.

#### APPLICATION.

THE choice and principal ſeed corn, with which the fields are ſowed, after they are prepared for it, doth admirably ſhadow forth thoſe excellent principles of grace infuſed into the regenerate ſoul. Their agreement, as they are both ſeed, is obvious, in the ten following particulars; and their excellency above other principles in ſeven more.

1. The earth at firſt naturally brought forth corn, and every ſeed yielding fruit, without human induſtry; but ſince the curſe came up-

on it, it muſt be plowed and ſowed, or no fruit can be expected. So man, at firſt, had all the principles of holineſs in his nature, but now they muſt be infuſed by regeneration, or elſe his nature is as void of holineſs as the barren and untilled deſert is of corn.

2. The earlier the ſeed is ſown, the better it is rooted, and enabled to endure the aſperities of the winter; ſo when grace is early infuſed, when nature is ſanctified in the bud, grace is thereby exceedingly advantaged. It was Timothy's ſingular advantage, that he knew the Scriptures from a child.

3. Froſts and ſnows conduce very much to the well-rooting of the ſeed, and make it ſpread and take root much the better. So do ſanctified afflictions, which uſually the people of God meet with after their calling, and often in their very ſeed time. 1 Theſ. i. 6. "And "you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the "word in much affliction." But if they have fair weather then, to be ſure they ſhall meet with weather hard enough afterwards. Heb. x. 32. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye "were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."

4. When the ſeed is caſt into the earth, it muſt be covered up by the harrow, the uſe whereof in huſbandry, is not only to lay a plain floor (as they ſpeak) but to open and let in the corn to the boſom of the earth, and there cover it up for its ſecurity from birds that would devour it. Thus doth the moſt wiſe God provide for the ſecurity of that grace which he at firſt diſſeminated in the hearts of his people. He is as well the finiſher as the author of their grace, Heb. xii. 2. and of this they may be confident, that he that hath begun a good work in them will perform it unto the day of Chriſt. The care of God over the graces of his people, is like the covering of the ſeed for ſecurity.

5. Seed-corn is in its own nature of much more value and worth than other corn; the huſbandman caſts in the principal wheat. So are the ſeeds of grace ſown in the renewed ſoul, for it is called *the ſeed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. *The divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. One dram of grace is far beyond all the glory of this world; it is more precious than gold which periſhes. 1 Pet. i. 7. "The price of it is above ru-"bies, and all that thou canſt deſire is not to be compared with it," Prov. iii. 15.

6. There is a great deal of ſpirit and vigour in a little ſeed; though it be ſmall in bulk, yet it is great in virtue and efficacy. Gracious habits are alſo vigorous and efficacious things. Such is their efficacy that they overcome the world, 1 John v. 4. "Whatſoever is born of "God overcometh the world." They totally alter and change the perſon in whom they are. "He that perſecuted us in times paſt, now "preacheth the faith which he once deſtroyed." They enable the ſoul to do and ſuffer great things for God, Heb. xi. 33, 34, 35.

7. The ſtalk and ear are potentially and virtually in a ſmall grain of corn. So are all the fruits of obedience which believers afterwards

bring forth to God, virtually contained in thoſe habits or ſeeds of grace. It is ſtrange to conſider, that from a *muſtard-ſeed*, (which, as Chriſt ſaith, is the leaſt of all ſeeds) ſhould grow ſuch great branches that the birds of the air may build their neſts in them. Surely, the heroical and famous acts and atchievements of the moſt renowned believers ſprang from ſmall beginnings at firſt, to that eminency and glory.

8. The fruitfulneſs of the ſeed depends upon the ſun and rain, by which they are quickened, as opened largely in the next chapter. And the principles of grace in us have as neceſſary a dependence upon the aſſiſting and exciting grace without us. For though it be true, they are immortal ſeed; yet that is not ſo much from their own ſtrength as from the promiſes made to them, and that conſtant influx from above, by which they are revived and preſerved from time to time.

9. The ſeed is fruitful in ſome ſoils more than in others, proſpers much better, and comes ſooner to maturity. So do graces thrive better and grow faſter in ſome perſons than in others. "Your faith "groweth exceedingly," 2 Theſ. i. 3. "Whilſt the things that are "in others are ready to die," Rev. iii. 2. Though no man's heart be naturally a kind ſoil to grace, yet doubtleſs grace is more advantaged in ſome diſpoſitions than in others.

10. And laſtly, their agreement, as ſeed, appears in this, the ſeed-corn is ſcattered into all parts of the field, as proportionably and equally as may be. So is grace diffuſed into all the faculties: the judgment, will, and all the affections are ſowed with theſe new principles. "The "God of peace ſanctify you wholly," 1 Theſ. v. 23.

And thus you ſee why principles of grace are called ſeed. Now, in the next place, (which is the ſecond thing promiſed, and mainly deſigned in this chapter) to ſhew you the choiceneſs and excellency of theſe holy principles with which ſanctified ſouls are embelliſhed and adorned; and to convince you that true grace excels all other principles by which other perſons are acted, even as the principal wheat doth the chaff, and refuſe ſtuff, I ſhall here inſtitute a compariſon betwixt grace and the moſt ſplendid, common gifts in the world; and its tranſcendent excellency above them all, will evidently appear in the ſeven following particulars.

1. The moſt excellent common gifts come out of the common treaſury of God's bounty, and that in a natural way. They are but the improvement of a man's natural abilities, (or as one calls them) the ſparks of nature blown up by the wind of a more benign and liberal education; but principles of grace are of a divine and heavenly original and extraction, not induced or raiſed from nature, but ſupernaturally infuſed by the Spirit from on high, John iii. 6. "That which "is born of the fleſh is fleſh, and that which is born of the Spirit is "ſpirit." When a ſoul is ſanctified by them, "he partakes of the "divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4. "Is born not of fleſh, nor of blood,

" nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. In this reſpect they differ from gifts, as the heavenly *manna* which was rained down from heaven differs from common bread, which, by pains and induſtry, the earth produces in a natural way.

2. The beſt natural gifts afford not that ſweetneſs and ſolid comfort to the ſoul that grace doth; they are but a dry ſtalk that affords no meat for a ſoul to feed on. A man may have an underſtanding full of light, and an heart void of comfort at the ſame time; but grace is a fountain of pureſt living ſtreams of peace and comfort, 1 Pet. i. 8. " Believing, we rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory: " light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." All true pleaſures and delights are ſeminally in grace, Pſal. xcvii. 11. They are ſown for them in theſe divine and heavenly graces, which are glory in the bud.

3. Gifts adorn the perſon, but do not ſecure the ſoul from wrath. A man may be admired for them among men, and rejected eternally by God. Who can conſiderately read that ſixth chapter of the Hebrews, and not tremble to think in what a forlorn caſe a ſoul may be, though ſet off and accompliſhed with the rareſt endowments of this kind! Mat. vii. 22. We read, that many ſhall ſay to Chriſt in " that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and " in thy name caſt out devils," &c. and yet themſelves at laſt caſt out as a prey to devils. How divinely and rhetorically did Balaam ſpeak and propheſy, Numb. xxiii. What rare and excellent parts had the Scribes and Phariſees? who upon that account, were ſtiled *Principes ſeculi*, the princes of the world. Cor. ii. 8. What profound and excellent parts had the heathen *ſages* and *philoſophers?* Theſe things are ſo far from ſecuring the ſoul from the wrath to come, that they often expoſe it unto wrath, and are as oil to increaſe the eternal burnings; but now gracious principles are the τα εχομενα σωτηριας, as the apoſtle calls them, Heb. vi. things that accompany and have ſalvation in them. Theſe are the things on which the promiſes of ſalvation run; and theſe treaſures are never found but in elect veſſels. Glory is by promiſe aſſured and made over to him that poſſeſſes them. There is but a little point of time betwixt him and the glorified ſpirits above. And how inconſiderable a matter is a little time, which contracts and winds up apace? For now is our ſalvation nearer than when we believed. And hence the ſcripture ſpeaks of them as already ſaved, Rom. viii. 24: " We are ſaved by hope," becauſe it is as ſure as if we were in heaven. We are made to ſit in heavenly places.

*Like a precious ſtone in a toad's head.*

4. Gifts may damnify the perſon that poſſeſſes them, and it may be better in reſpect of a man's own condition he had never had them. *Knowledge* (ſaith the apoſtle) *puffeth up*, 1 Cor. viii. 1. makes the ſoul proud and flatulent. It is a hard thing to know much, and not to know it too much. The ſaint's knowledge is better than the ſcholar's; for he hath his own heart inſtead of a commentary to help

him. Ariſtotle ſaid, a little knowledge about heavenly things, though conjectural, is better than much of earthly things, though certain. "The world by wiſdom knew not God," (ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. i. 12.) i. e. Their learning hanged in their light, they were too wiſe to ſubmit to the ſimplicity of the goſpel. The excellent parts of the old heretics did but ſerve to midwife into the world the monſtrous birth of ſoul-damning hereſies. *Cupit abs te ornari diabolus*, as Auſtin ſaid to that ingenious young ſcholar; the devil deſires to be adorned by thee. But now grace itſelf is not ſubject to ſuch abuſes, it cannot be the proper *univocal cauſe* of any evil effect: it cannot puff up the heart, but always humbles it, nor ſerves the devil's deſigns, but ever oppoſes them.

5. Gifts may be given a man for the ſake of others, and not out of any love to himſelf; they are but as an excellent diſh of meat which a man ſends to a nurſe, not for her ſake ſo much as for his child's that ſucks her. God, indeed, makes uſe of them to do his children good, the church is benefited by them, though themſelves are but like cooks; they prepare excellent diſhes, on which the ſaints feed, and are nouriſhed, though themſelves taſte them not. They are *dona miniſtrantia, non ſanctificantia*, miniſtering, but not ſanctifying gifts, proceeding not from the good-will of God to him that hath them, but to thoſe he benefits by them. And O what a ſad conſideration will this be one day to ſuch a perſon, to think I helped ſuch a ſoul to heaven, while I myſelf muſt lodge in hell?

6. Sin in the reign and power of it, may cohabit with the moſt excellent natural gifts under the ſame roof, I mean in the ſame heart. A man may have the tongue of an angel, and the heart of a devil. The wiſdom of the philoſophers (ſaith Lactantius) *non excindit vitia ſed abſcondit*, doth not root out, but hide their vices. The learned Phariſees were but painted ſepulchres. Gifts are but as a fair glove drawn over a foul hand: But now grace is incompatible with ſin in dominion, it purifies the heart, Acts xv. 6. cleanſes the conſcience, Heb. ix. 14. crucifies the affections and luſts of the fleſh, Gal. v. 24. is not content with the concealment, but ruin of corruptions.

7. And laſtly, Gifts muſt leave us at laſt. "Whether there be "knowledge that ſhall ceaſe. All fleſh is graſs, and the goodlineſs "of it as the flower of the graſs; the graſs withereth, the flower "fadeth, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever," Iſa. xl. 6, 8. Many times they leave a man before death. One knock, if it hit right, (as one ſaith) may make a wiſe man a fool; but, to be ſure, they all leave us at death. "Doth not his excellency which is in him go "away?" Job iv. 21. yea, then all natural excellency departs: Death ſtrips the ſoul of all thoſe ſplendid ornaments; then the rhetorical tongue is ſtruck dumb; the nimble wit and curious fancy ſhall entertain your ears with no more pleaſant diſcourſes. *Nunquam jocos dabis*, as Adrian ſaid to his departing ſoul; but grace aſcends with the ſoul into eternity, and there receives its perfection, and accompliſh-

ment. Gifts take their leave of the ſoul as Orpah did of Naomi; but grace ſaith then, as Ruth, Where thou goeſt I will go, and, *where thou lodgeſt I will lodge, and nothing ſhall ſeparate thee and me.* Now put all this together, and then judge whether the apoſtle ſpoke hyperboles, when he ſaid, "Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts, and yet I ſhew unto "you a more excellent way." 1 Cor. xii. ult. And thus you have the choiceneſs of theſe principles alſo.

REFLECTIONS.

*The gracious ſoul's reflection.* The lines are fallen to me in a pleaſant place, may the gracious ſoul ſay: How defective ſoever I am in gifts, yet bleſſed be the Lord who hath ſown the ſeeds of true grace in my heart. What though I am not famed and honoured among men, let it ſuffice me that I am precious in the eyes of the Lord. Though he hath not abounded to me in gifts of nature, "Yet bleſſed be the God and Father of my Lord "Jeſus Chriſt, who hath abounded to me in all ſpiritual bleſſings, in "heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus," Eph. i. 3. Is not a true jewel, though ſpurned in the dirt, more precious than a falſe one, though ſet in gold? Why art thou troubled, O my ſoul, for the want of theſe things which reprobates may have? and art not rather admiring and bleſſing God for thoſe things which none but the darlings and favourites of heaven can have? Is not an ounce of pure gold more valuable than many pounds of gilded braſs? What though the dews of Helicon deſcend not upon my head, if in the mean time the ſweet influences of Sion fall upon my heart? O my God! how much ſoever others are elated by the light of their knowledge, I have cauſe, with humility to adore thee for the heavenly heat with which thou haſt warmed my affections.

*The deceived ſoul's reflection.* Pauſe a while, my ſoul, upon this point: With what ſeed is my heart ſown, and of what kind are thoſe things wherein I excel others? Are they indeed ſpecial ſeeds of grace, or common gifts and natural excellencies? If the latter, little cauſe have I to pride myſelf in them, were they ten thouſand times more than they are. If theſe things be indeed the things that accompany ſalvation, the ſeed of God, the true and real work of grace, then, (1.) How comes it to paſs that I never found my throws, or travailing pangs in the production of them? It is affirmed and generally acknowledged, that the *new creature* is never brought forth without ſuch pain and compunctions of heart, Acts ii. 37. I have indeed often felt an aching head, whilſt I have read and ſtudied to increaſe my knowledge? But when did I feel an aching heart for ſin? O I begin to ſuſpect that it is not right. Yea, (2.) And my ſuſpicion increaſes while I conſider that grace is of an humbling nature, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Lord, how have I been elated by my gifts, and valued myſelf above what was meet? O

how have I delighted in the noiſe of the Phariſee's trumpet! Mat. vi. 2. No muſic ſo ſweet as that. Say, O my conſcience, have I not delighted more in the theatre than the cloſet? In the praiſe of men, than the approbation of God? O how many evidences doſt thou produce againſt me? Indeed theſe are ſad ſymptoms that I have ſhewed thee, but there is yet another, which renders thy caſe more ſuſpicious yet, yea, that which thou canſt make no rational defence againſt, even the ineffectualneſs of all thy gifts and knowledge to mortify any one of all thy luſts. It is beyond all diſpute, that gifts may, but grace cannot conſiſt without mortification of ſin, Gal. v. 24. Now what luſt hath fallen before theſe excellent parts of mine? Doth not pride, paſſion, covetouſneſs, and indeed the whole body of ſin, live and thrive in me as much as ever? Lord, I yield the cauſe, I can defend it no longer againſt my conſcience, which caſts and condemns me, by full proof, to be but in a wretched, curſed, lamentable ſtate, notwithſtanding all my knowledge and flouriſhing gifts. O ſhew me a more excellent way. Lord! that I had the ſincerity of the pooreſt ſaint, though I ſhould loſe the applauſe of all my parts; with theſe I ſee I may go to hell, but without ſome better thing no hope of heaven.

## THE POEM.

GREAT difference betwixt that ſeed is found,
With which you ſow your ſev'ral plots of ground.
Seed-wheat doth far excel in dignity
The cheaper barley, and the coarſer rye:
Tho' in themſelves they good and wholeſome are,
Yet theſe with choiceſt wheat may not compare.
Men's hearts, like fields, are ſow'd with different grain,
Some baſer, ſome more noble, ſome again
Excelling both the former, more than wheat
Excels that grain your ſwine and horſes eat.
For principles of mere morality,
Like cummin, barley, fitches, peaſe, or rye,
In thoſe men's hearts are often to be found,
Whom yet the ſcripture calleth curſed ground;
And nobler principles than theſe, ſometime
Call'd common grace, and ſpiritual gifts, which ſhine
In ſome men's heads, where is there habitation;
Yet they are no companions of ſalvation.
Theſe purchaſe honour both from great and ſmall:
But I muſt tell thee, that if this be all,
Tho' like an angel in theſe gifts you ſhine
Amongſt blind mortals, for a little time;
The day's at hand, when, ſuch as thou muſt take
Thy lot with devils in th' infernal lake.
But principles of ſpecial, ſaving grace,

Whoſe ſeat is in the heart, not head, or face;
Like ſolid wheat ſown in a fruitful field,
Shall ſpring, and flouriſh, and at laſt will yield
A glorious harveſt of eternal reſt,
To him that nouriſh'd them within his breaſt.
O grace! how orient art thou! how divine!
What is the glory of all gifts to thine!
Diſſeminate this ſeed within my heart,
My God, I pray thee, tho' thou ſhouldſt impart
The leſs of gifts; then I may truly ſay,
That thou haſt ſhew'd me the more excellent way.

## CHAP. IX.

### Upon ſpringing-weather after ſeed-time.

*By heaven's influence corn and plants do ſpring,*
*God's ſhow'rs of grace do make his valleys ſing.*

OBSERVATION.

THE earth, after that it is plowed and ſowed, muſt be watered, and warmed with the dews and influences of heaven, or no fruit can be expected. If God do not open to you his good treaſure, the heavens to give rain unto the land in its ſeaſon, and bleſs all the work of your hands, as it is Deut. xxviii. 12. the earth cannot yield her increaſe. The order and dependence of natural cauſes in the production of fruit, is excellently deſcribed, Hoſ. i. 21, 22. "I will "hear the heavens, and they ſhall hear the earth; and the earth "ſhall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, and they ſhall hear Jez-"reel." Jezreel muſt have corn, and wine, and oil, or they cannot live; they cannot have it unleſs the earth bring it forth; the earth cannot bring it forth without the heavens; the heavens cannot yield a drop unleſs God hear them, that is, unlock and open them. * 'Nature, and natural cauſes, are nothing elſe but the order in 'which God works.' This ſome heathens, by the light of nature, acknowledged, and therefore when they went to plow in the morning, they did lay one hand upon the plow (to ſpeak their own part to be painfulneſs) and held up the other hand to Ceres, the goddeſs of corn, to ſhew that their expectation of plenty was from their ſuppoſed deity †. I fear many Chriſtians lay both hands to the plow, and ſeldom lift up heart, or hand to God, when about that work.

* *Natura nihil aliud eſt quam divinorum operum ordo.* Berentius
† Weem's Cerem. Law.

There was an huſbandman (ſaith ‡ Mr Smith) that always ſowed good ſeed, but never had good corn; at laſt a neighbour came to him, and ſaid, I will tell you what probably may be the cauſe of it; it may be (ſaid he) you do not ſteep your ſeed: No, truly, ſaid the other, nor did I ever hear that ſeed muſt be ſteeped. Yes, ſurely, ſaid his neighbour, and I will tell you how; it muſt be ſteeped in prayer. When the party heard this, he thanked him for his counſel, reformed his fault, and had as good corn as any man whatſoever. Surely it is not the huſbandman's, but God's ſteeps, that drop fatneſs. *Alma mater terra*, the earth indeed is a fruitful mother, but the rain which fecundates, and fertilizes it, hath no other Father but God, Job xxxviii. 28.

APPLICATION.

AS impoſſible it is (in an ordinary way) for ſouls to be made fruitful in grace and holineſs, without the dews and influences of ordinances, and the bleſſing of God upon them, as for the earth to yield her fruit without the natural influences of heaven; for look, what dews, ſhowers, and clear ſhinings after rain are to the fields, that the word and ordinances of God are to the ſouls of men. "My "doctrine ſhall drop as the rain, my ſpeech ſhall diſtil as the dew, "as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowers upon the graſs," Deut. xxxii. 2. "For as the rain cometh down, and the "ſnow from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring "forth and bud; ſo ſhall my word be that goeth forth of my "mouth." Iſa. lv. 10. 11. And as the doctrine of the goſpel is rain, ſo goſpel-miniſters are the clouds in which thoſe heavenly vapours are bound up: the reſemblance lies in the following particulars.

1. The rain comes from heaven, Acts xiv. 17. "He gave us "rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons," *&c.* The doctrines of the goſpel are alſo of an heavenly extraction and deſcent; they are heavenly truths which are brought to you in earthen veſſels; things that were hid in God, and come from his boſom, Eph. iii. 8, 9. What Nicodemus ſaid of Chriſt is, in a proportion, true of every faithful diſpenſer of the goſpel, "Thou art a teacher come from God," John iii. 2. You are not to look upon the truths which miniſters deliver, as the mere effects and fruits of their inventions and parts; they are but the conduits through which theſe celeſtial waters are conveyed to you. It is all heavenly, the officers are from heaven, Eph. iv. 12. their doctrine from heaven, Eph. iii. 8, 9. the efficacy and ſucceſs of it from heaven, 1 Cor. iii. 3. "What I received of the Lord (ſaith Paul) that have I delivered unto you," 1 Cor. xi. 23. The



‡ Smith's Eſſex Dove.

ſame may every goſpel-miniſter ſay too. That is the firſt:

And then, *(2dly.)* The rains falls by divine direction and appointment: "He cauſes it to rain upon one city, and not upon another," Amos iv. 7. You ſhall often ſee a cloud diſſolve and ſpend itſelf upon one place, when there is not a drop within a few miles of it. Thus is the goſpel ſent to ſhed its rich influences upon one place, and not upon another; it pours down ſhowers of bleſſings upon one town or pariſh, whilſt others are dry like the ground which lay near to Gideon's wet fleece. "To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent," Acts xiii. 26. *Sent*; it comes not by *chance*, but by *commiſſion* and appointment, and it is ſent to you by ſpecial direction. Miniſters can no more go whither they pleaſe, than the ſailing clouds can move againſt the wind. Paul and Timothy, were two fruitful clouds that ſent down many ſweet refreſhing ſhowers upon every place whither they came. The Lord ſent them through Phrygia and Galatia, but forbad them to preach the word in Aſia, Acts xvi. 6. "And "when they eſſayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit ſuffered them "not," v. 7. But a man of Macedonia appears to Paul in a viſion, and prayed him, ſaying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us," ver. 9. Thus you ſee how the *myſtical*, as well as the *natural* clouds are moved according to divine counſel; and though miniſters are not now diſpoſed to their reſpective places, in ſuch an extraordinary way, yet there is ſtill a ſpecial hand of the Spirit guiding their motions, which is ſeen partly in qualifing them for ſuch a people, and partly in drawing out their hearts to elect and call them, and inclining their hearts to accept the call.

3. There is a great deal of difference in the ſhowers of rain that fall upon the earth. Sometimes you have an haſty ſhower, which makes the ways float, and the ſtreets run, but it is gone preſently, the earth hath but little benefit by it; and ſometimes you have a ſweet, gentle, ſoaking rain, that moderately ſoaks to the root, and refreſhes the earth abundantly. This is called the *ſmall rain*, and the former, *the great rain of his ſtrength*, Job xxxvii. 6. So it is in theſe ſpiritual ſhowers; the effects of ſome ſermons (like a ſudden ſpout of rain) are very tranſient, that touch the heart a little for the preſent, by way of conviction or comfort, but it fleets away immediately, Jam. i. 23. At other times the goſpel, like a ſettled, moderate rain, ſoaks to the root, to the very heart. So did that ſweet ſhower which fell, Acts ii. 37. It ſearched the root, it went to the heart; the influences of it are ſometimes abiding, and do much longer remain in, and refreſh the heart, than the rain doth the earth. There be effects left in ſome hearts, by ſome ſermons and duties, that will never go out of it as long as they live. "I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou haſt quick-"ened me," Pſal. cxix. 93.

4. The rain is moſt beneficial to the earth, when there come ſweet, warm ſun-blaſts with it, or after it. This the ſcripture calls "a clear ſhining after rain," 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. by which the *ſeminal*

*virtue* of the earth is drawn forth, and then the herbs, flowers, and corn ſprout abundantly. So it is with goſpel-ſhowers, when the Sun of righteouſneſs opens upon poor ſouls under the word, darting down the beams of grace and love upon them, whilſt they are attending on it, (juſt as you ſometimes ſee a ſweet ſhower fall while the ſun ſhines out). O how comfortable is this! and effectual to melt the heart! And as the warm rain is moſt refreſhing, ſo when the word comes warmly, from the melting affections of the preacher, who imparts not only the goſpel, but his own ſoul with it, 1 Theſſ. ii. 8. this doth abundantly more good than that which drops coldly from the lips of the unaffected ſpeaker.

5. Showers of rain do exceedingly refreſh the earth, as a man is refreſhed by a draught of water, when his ſpirits are even ſpent. O how welcome is a ſhower to the thirſty ground! Hence the little hills are ſaid to rejoice on every ſide, yea, to ſhout for joy, and ſing when a ſhower comes, Pſal. lxv. 12, 13. But never were ſhowers of rain ſo ſweetly refreſhing to the thirſty earth, as goſpel-ſhowers are to gracious ſouls, Col. iv. 8. they comfort their very hearts. What joy was there in Samaria, when the goſpel came to that place? Acts viii. 8. It revives the ſoul, it is *mel in ore, melos in aure, jubilum in corde*, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and a very jubilee in the heart.

6. Rain is neceſſary at ſeed-time, to make ready the earth to receive the ſeed, Pſal. lxv. 9, 10. "Thou viſiteſt the earth, and watereſt it; "thou greatly enricheſt it with the river of God, which is full of wa- "ter; thou prepareſt them corn, when thou haſt ſo provided for it; "thou watereſt the ridges thereof abundantly, thou ſettleſt the fur- "rows thereof, thou makeſt it ſoft with ſhowers, thou bleſſeſt the "ſpringing thereof." And this the ſcripture calls the former rain. And as this is neceſſary about ſeed-time, ſo the latter rain is as needful about earing-time, to diſcloſe the ear, and to bring it to perfection; both theſe are great bleſſings to the earth, and conduce to a plentiful harveſt, Joel ii. 23, 24. "Be glad then ye children of Sion, and "rejoice in the Lord your God, for he hath given you the former "rain moderately, and he will cauſe to come down for you the rain, "the former and the latter rain in the firſt month, and the floors "ſhall be full of wheat, and the fats ſhall overflow with wine and "oil." Thus the goſpel hath a double uſe and benefit alſo. It is neceſſary as the former rain at ſeed-time, it cauſes the firſt ſpring of grace in the heart, Pſal. xix. 7. And there could be (in an ordinary way) no ſpring of grace without it, Prov. xxix. 18. And as this former rain is neceſſary to cauſe the firſt ſpring of grace, ſo alſo it hath the uſe of the latter rain to ripen thoſe precious fruits of the Spirit in the ſouls of believers, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. "He gave ſome apoſtles, "and ſome prophets, and ſome evangeliſts, and ſome paſtors and "teachers, for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the mi- "niſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt, till we all come in the

" unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a per-
" fect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt." Were all the elect converted unto God, yet ſtill there would be a neceſſity of a goſpel-miniſtry.

7. After a great glut of rain, uſually there comes a drought; it is a common country proverb, *Wet and dry pay one another.* And truly when a people are glutted with a fulneſs of goſpel-mercies, it is uſual with God to ſhut up and reſtrain the goſpel-clouds, that, for a time at leaſt, there be no dews upon them, and thereby teach them to prize their deſpiſed (becauſe common) mercies at an higher rate. For as a good man once ſaid, mercies are beſt known by the back, and moſt prized when moſt wanted. " In thoſe days the word of " the Lord was precious, there was no open viſion," 1 Sam. iii. 1. It is with ſpiritual as with temporal food, ſlighted when plenteous, but if a famine once come, then every bit of bread is precious. Jeruſalem remembered in the days of her afflictions, and of her miſery, all her pleaſant things that ſhe had in the days of old, Lam. i. 7. It is both a ſinful and dangerous thing to wantonize with goſpel-mercies, and deſpiſe the plaineſt (if faithful) miniſters of the goſpel. The time may come when you may be glad of the plaineſt ſermon from the mouth of the meaneſt ambaſſador of Chriſt.

8. To conclude, The prayers of ſaints are the keys that open and ſhut the natural clouds, and cauſe them either to give out, or withhold their influences, Jam. v. 17, 18 " Elias was a man ſubject to " like paſſions, as we are, and he prayed earneſtly that it might not " rain, and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and " ſix months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and " the earth brought forth her fruit." God hath ſubjected the works of his hands to the prayers of his ſaints, Iſa. xlv. 11.

Prayer is alſo the golden key which opens theſe myſtical goſpel-clouds, and diſſolves them into ſweet, gracious ſhowers. God will have the whole work of the miniſtry carried on by the prayers of his people; they firſt obtain their miniſters by prayer, Luke x. 2. " Pray " ye the Lord of the harveſt to ſend forth labourers into the vine-" yard." It is by the help of prayer that they are carried on, and enabled to exerciſe their miniſtry: They may tell their people as a great general once told his ſoldiers, 'That he flew upon their wings.' " Pray for me, (ſaith the great apoſtle) that utterance may be given " me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the myſ-" teries of the goſpel," Eph. vi. 19. Yea, by the ſaints prayers it is, that miniſters obtain the ſucceſs and fruits of their labours, 2 Theſſ. iii. 1. " Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified even as it is with you." And thus you have the metaphor opened. Now, O! that theſe truths might come down in ſweet ſhowers upon the hearts both of *miniſters* and people in the following reflections.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Am I then a cloud? And is my doctrine as rain to water the Lord's inheritance? And yet do I think it much to be toſſed up and down by the furious winds and ſtorms of perſecution? Do not I ſee the clouds above me in continual motions and agitations? And ſhall I dream of a fixed, ſettled ſtate? No; falſe teachers, who are clouds without rain, are more likely to enjoy that than I. Which of all the prophets have not been toſſed and hurried worſe than I? Acts vii. 52. He that will not let men alone to be quiet in their luſts, muſt expect but little quiet from men in this life. But it is enough, Lord, that a reſt remaineth for thy ſervant; let me be ſo wiſe to ſecure a reſt to come, and not ſo vain to expect it on earth.

*Three reflections for goſpel-miniſters.*

2. And, O that I might ſtudy thoſe inſtructing clouds, from which, as from the bottles of heaven, God pours down refreſhing ſhowers to quench and ſatisfy the thirſty earth! In this may I reſemble them, and come amongſt the people of the Lord, "in the fulneſs of the "bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt," Rom. xv. 29. O let not thoſe thirſty ſouls that wait for me as for the rain, Job xxix. 23. "return "like the troops of Tema, aſhamed, with their heads covered," Job vi. 19. O that my lips might refreſh many! Let me never be like thoſe empty clouds, which deceive the hopes of thirſty ſouls; but let my doctrine deſcend as the rain, and diſtil as the dew, and let that plot of thine inheritance which thou haſt aſſigned to me, be as a field which the Lord hath bleſſed.

3. Once more, lift up thine eyes to the clouds, and behold, to how great an height the ſun hath mounted them, for by reaſon of their ſublimity it is that they are called the clouds of heaven, Matth. xxiv. 30. Lord, let me be a cloud of heaven too: Let my heart and converſation be both there! Who is more advantaged for an heavenly life than I? heavenly truths are the ſubjects of my daily ſtudy, and ſhall earthly things be the objects of my daily delights and loves? God forbid that ever my earthly converſation ſhould contradict and ſhame my heavenly calling and profeſſion. Shine forth thou glorious ſun of righteouſneſs, and my heart ſhall quickly be attracted and mounted above theſe viſible clouds, yea, and above the aſpectable heavens.

1. Is the goſpel rain, and are its miniſters clouds? Woe is me then, that my habitation is upon the mountains of Gilboa, where there are no dews! Ah ſad lot, that I ſhould be like Gideon's dry fleece, whilſt the ground round about me is wet with the dew of heaven; O thou that commandeſt the clouds above, and openeſt the windows of heaven, remember and refreſh this parched wilderneſs,

*Three reflections for private Chriſtians.*

*For thoſe that want a goſpel-miniſtry.*

wherein I live with ſhowers of grace, that we may not be as the heath in the deſart, which ſeeth not when good cometh, nor inhabit the parched places of the wilderneſs.

*For thoſe that enjoy a goſpel-miniſtry.*

2. O Lord, thou haſt cauſed the heavens above me to be black with clouds, thou openeſt the celeſtial caſements from above, and daily ſendeſt down ſhowers of goſpel-bleſſings: O that I might be as the parched earth under them! Not for barrenneſs, but for thirſtineſs. Let me ſay, "My ſoul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the "courts of the Lord:" that I might there ſee the beauty of the Lord. Doth the ſpungy earth ſo greedily ſuck up the ſhowers, and open as many mouths as there are clefts in it, to receive what the clouds diſpenſe? And ſhall thoſe precious ſoul-enriching ſhowers fleet away unprofitably from me? If ſo, then,

*For unprofitable hearers.*

5. What an account have I to make for all thoſe goſpel-bleſſings that I have enjoyed; for all thoſe goſpel-dews and ſhowers wherewith I have been watered! Should I be found fruitleſs at laſt, it will fare better with the barren and uncultivated wilderneſs than with me; more tolerable for Indians and Barbarians that never heard the goſpel, than for me that have been ſo aſſiduouſly and plentifully watered by it. Lord! what a difference wilt thou put in the great day, betwixt ſimple and pertinacious barreneſs? Surely, if my root be not rottenneſs, ſuch heavenly waterings and influences as theſe will make it ſprout forth into fruits of obedience.

## THE POEM.

THE vegetables here below depend
Upon thoſe treaſures which the heavens do ſpend
Moſt bounteouſly upon them, to preſerve
Their being and their beauty. This may ſerve
To ſhadow forth a heavenly myſtery,
Which thus preſents itſelf before your eye.
As when the ſun draws near us in the ſpring,
All creatures do rejoice, birds chirp and ſing
The face of nature ſmiles; the fields adorn
Themſelves with rich embroideries: The corn
Revives, and ſhooteth up; the warm ſweet rain
Makes trees and herbs ſprout forth, and ſpring amain.
Walk but the fields in ſuch a fragrant morn,
How do the birds your ears with muſic charm!
The flowers their flaming beauties do preſent
Unto your captiv'd eyes; and for their ſcent,
The ſweet Arabian gums cannot compare,
Which thus perfume the circumambient air.
So when the goſpel ſheds its cheering beams
On gracious ſouls, like thoſe ſweet-warming gleams

Which God ordains in nature, to draw forth
The virtue ſeminal that's in the earth;
It warms their hearts, their languid graces cheers,
And on ſuch ſouls a ſpring-like face appears.
The gracious ſhowers theſe ſpiritual clouds do yield,
Enriches them with ſweetneſs, like a field
Which God hath bleſs'd. Oh! 'tis exceeding ſweet,
When gracious hearts and heavenly truths do meet!
How ſhould the hearts of ſaints within them ſpring,
When they behold the meſſengers that bring
Theſe gladſome tidings? Yea, their very feet
Are beautiful, becauſe their meſſage's ſweet.
Oh what a mercy does thoſe ſouls enjoy,
On whom ſuch goſpel-dews fall day by day!
Thrice happy land! which in this pleaſant ſpring,
Can hear theſe turtles in her hedges ſing?
O prize ſuch mercies! If you aſk me, why?
Read on, you'll ſee there's reaſon by and by.

## CHAP. X.

### Upon a Dearth through want of Rain.

*If God reſtrains the ſhow'rs, you howl and cry:*
*Shall ſaints not mourn when ſpiritual clouds are dry?*

#### OBSERVATION.

IT is deſervedly accounted a ſad judgment, when God ſhuts up the heavens over our heads, and makes the earth as braſs under our feet, Deut. xxviii. 23. Then the huſbandmen are called to mourning, Joel i. 11. All the fields do languiſh, and the bellowing cattle are pined with thirſt. Such a ſad ſtate the prophet rhetorically deſcribes, Jer. xiv. 3, 4, 5, 6. "The nobles have ſent their little ones "to the waters; they came to the pits and found no water; they "returned with their veſſels empty; they were aſhamed and con- "founded, and covered their heads, becauſe the ground is chapt; "for there was no rain in the earth; the plowmen were aſhamed, "they covered their heads; yea, the hind alſo calved in the field, "and forſook it, becauſe there was no graſs; and the wild aſſes did "ſtand in the high places: They ſnuffed up the wind like dragons; "their eyes failed becauſe there was no graſs."

And that which makes the want of rain ſo terrible a judgment, is the famine of bread, which neceſſarily follows theſe extraordinary droughts, and is one of the ſoreſt temporal judgments which God inflicts upon the world.

APPLICATION.

AND, truly as much cauſe have they to weep and tremble over whoſe ſouls God ſhuts up the ſpiritual clouds of the goſpel, and thereby ſends a ſpiritual famine upon their ſouls. Such a judgment the Lord threatens in Amos viii. 11. "Behold the day is come, "ſaith the Lord, that I will ſend a famine in the land, not a famine "of bread, nor a thirſt for water, but of hearing the word of the "Lord." The meaning is, I will ſend a more fearful judgment than that of the famine of bread; for this particle [not] is not *excluſive* but *exceſſive*; implying, that a famine of bread is nothing, or but a light judgment compared with the famine of the word. Parallel to which is that text, Iſa. v. 6. "I will lay it waſte (ſaith God of the fruitleſs "church;) it ſhall not be pruned nor digged; but there ſhall come "up briers and thorns; I will alſo command the clouds that they "rain not upon it." And we find both in human and ſacred hiſtories, that when God hath ſhut up the ſpiritual clouds, removing or ſilencing his miniſters, ſenſible Chriſtians have ever been deeply affected with it, and reckoned it a moſt tremendous judgment. Thus the Chriſtians of Antioch, when Chryſoſtom their miniſter was baniſhed, * they judged it better to loſe the ſun out of the firmament, than loſe that, their miniſter. And when Nazianzen was taking his leave of Conſtantinople, as he was preaching his *farewel ſermon*, the people were exceedingly affected with his loſs; and among the reſt, an old man in the congregation fell into a bitter paſſion, and cried out, *Aude pater, et tecum trinitatem ipſam ejice:* i. e. Go, Father, if you dare, and take away the whole trinity with you; meaning, that God would not ſtay when he was gone. How did the Chriſtians of Antioch alſo weep and lament, when Paul was taking his farewel of them? Acts xx. 37, 38. He had been a cloud of bleſſings to that place; but now they muſt expect no more ſhowers from him. Oh! they knew not how to give up ſuch a miniſter! when the ark of God (which was the ſymbol of the Divine preſence among the Jews) was taken, "All the city cried out," 1 Sam. iv. 13. Oh the loſs of a goſpel-miniſtry is an ineſtimable loſs, not to be repaired but by its own return, or by heaven! Mr Greenham tells us, that in the times of popiſh perſecution, when godly miniſters were haled away from their flocks to *martyrdom*, the poor Chriſtians would meet them in the way to the priſons, or ſtake, with their little ones in their arms, and throwing themſelves at their feet, would thus beſpeak them, 'What ſhall be our eſtate, now you are gone to *martyrdom?* Who 'ſhall inſtruct theſe poor babes? Who ſhall eaſe our afflicted con-'ſciences? Who ſhall lead us in the way of life? Recompenſe unto 'them, O Lord, as they have deſerved, who are the cauſes of this: 'Lord give them ſad hearts.' *Quis talia fando, temperet a lachrymis?*

* It is better for us to want the light of the ſun, than the teaching of Chryſoſtom.

And to let you ſee there is ſufficient ground for this ſorrow, when God reſtrains the influences of the goſpel, ſolemnly conſider the following particulars.

1. That it is a dreadful token of God's great anger againſt that people from whom he removes the goſpel. The anger of God was fearfully incenſed againſt the church of Epheſus, when he did but threaten to come againſt her, and remove the candleſtick out of its place, Rev. ii. 5. It is a ſtroke at the ſoul, a blow at the root; uſually the laſt, and therefore the worſt of judgments. There is a pedigree of judgments; firſt, Gomer bears Jezreel; next Lo-ruhama, and at laſt brings forth Lo-ammi, Hoſea i. 4, 6, 8, 9.

2. There is cauſe of mourning, if you conſider the deplorable eſtate in which all the unregenerate ſouls are left, after the goſpel is removed from them. What will become of theſe? Or by whom ſhall they be gathered? It made the bowels of Chriſt yern within him, when he looked upon the ſcattered multitude that had no ſhepherd, Matth. ix. 36. What an eaſy conqueſt doth the devil now make of them! How faſt doth hell fill in ſuch times! Poor ſouls being driven thither in droves, and none to reſcue them? Matthew Paris tells us, that in the year 1073, when preaching was ſuppreſſed at Rome, letters were then framed as coming from hell, wherein the devil gave them thanks for the multitude of ſouls they had ſent to him that year. But truly we need not talk of letters from hell, we are told from heaven, how deplorable the condition of ſuch poor ſouls is; See Prov. xxviii. 19. Hoſ. iv. 6. Or,

3. The judgment will yet appear very heavy, if you conſider the loſs which God's own people ſuſtain by the removal of the goſpel; for therein they loſe, (1.) Their chief glory, Rom. iii. 2. The principal thing in which the peculiar glory of Iſrael conſiſted was this, "That unto them were committed the oracles of God." On that account it was called the glorious land, Dan. xi. 16. This made them greater than all the nations round about them, Deut. iv. 7, 8. (2.) By loſing the ordinances they loſe their quickenings, comforts, and ſoul-refreſhments; for all theſe are ſweet ſtreams from the goſpel-fountain, Pſalm cxix. 50. Col. iv. 8. No wonder then to hear the people of God complain of dead hearts when the goſpel is removed. (3.) In the loſs of the goſpel they loſe their defence and ſafety. This is their hedge, their wall of protection, Iſa. v. 5. Walls and hedges (ſaith *Muſculus in loc.*) are the ordinances of God, which ſerved both *ad ſeparationem et munitionem*, to diſtinguiſh and to defend them. When God plucks up this hedge, and breaks down this wall, all miſchiefs break in upon us preſently, 2 Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6, "Now for a long ſeaſon Iſrael hath been without the true God "and without a teaching prieſt, and without law.———And in "thoſe times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him

" that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of " the countries, and nation was deſtroyed of nation, and city of " city; for God did vex them with all adverſity." How long did Jeruſalem remain after that voice was heard in the temple, *Migremus hinc?* Let us be gone. (4.) With the goſpel, we loſe our temporal enjoyments and creature-comforts. Theſe uſually come and go with the goſpel. When God had once written *Lo-ammi* upon Iſrael, the next news was this, " I will recover my wool and my flax," Hoſea ii. 9. (5.) And, laſtly, to come up to the very caſe in hand, they loſe with it their ſpiritual food and ſoul-ſubſiſtence, for the goſpel is their *feaſt of fat things*, Iſa. xxv. 6. their ſpiritual wells, Iſa. xii. 3. a dole diſtributed among the Lord's poor, Rom. i. 11. In a word, it is as the rain and dews of heaven, as hath been ſhewed, which being reſtrained, a ſpiritual famine neceſſarily follows, a famine, of all the moſt terrible. Now to ſhew you the analogy between this and a temporal famine, that therein you may ſee what cauſe you have to be deeply affected with it, take it in theſe ſix following particulars.

1. A famine cauſed by the failing of bread, or that which is in the ſtead, and hath the uſe of bread. Dainties and ſuperfluous rarities may fail, and yet men may ſubſiſt comfortably. As long as people have bread and water, they will not famiſh; but take away bread once, and the ſpirit of man faileth. Upon this account bread is called a ſtaff, Pſal. cv. 16. becauſe what a ſtaff is to an aged and feeble man, that bread is to the faint and feeble ſpirits, which even ſo lean upon it. And look, what bread is to the natural ſpirits, that, and more than that, the word is to gracious ſpirits, Job xxiii. 12. " I have " eſteemed the words of thy mouth more than my neceſſary food." If once God break this ſtaff, the inner-man, that hidden man of the heart, will quickly begin to fail and faulter.

2. It is not every degree of ſcarcity of bread that preſently makes a famine, but a general failing of it; when no bread is to be had, or that which is, yields no nutriment. (For a famine may as well be occaſioned by God's taking away *panis nutrimentum*, the nouriſhing virtue of bread, that it ſhall ſignify no more, as to the end of bread, than a chip, Hag. i. 6. as by taking away *panem nutrientem*, bread itſelf, Iſa. iii. 1.) And ſo it is in a ſpiritual famine, which is occaſioned, either by God's removing all the ordinances, and making viſion utterly to fail; or elſe, though there be preaching, prayer, and other ordinances left, (at leaſt the names and ſhadows of them) yet the preſence of God is not with them. There is no marrow in the bone, no milk in the breaſt; and ſo, as to ſoul-ſubſiſtence, it is all one, as if there were no ſuch things.

3. In a corporeal famine, mean and coarſe things become ſweet and pleaſant. Famine raiſes the price and eſteem of them. That which before you would have thrown to your dogs, now goes down pleaſantly with yourſelves. To the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is

ſweet, Prov. xxvii. 7. It is the Dutch proverb, and a very true one, *Hunger is the beſt cook**.

'In time of famine coarſeſt fare contents,
'The barking ſtomach ſtrains complements.'

It is ſtoried of Artaxerxes Memnon, that when he was flying before his enemies, he fed hungrily upon barley-bread, and ſaid, *Cujuſmodi voluptatis hactenus inexpertus fui!* O what pleaſure have I hitherto been ignorant of! When great Darius drank the puddled water, that had been defiled with dead carcaſes, which had been ſlain in that famous battle, he profeſſed he never drank more pleaſant drink. And famous Hunniades ſaid, he never faired more daintily, than when (in a like exigence) he ſupped upon bread, onions, and water, with a poor ſhepherd in his cottage.

Juſt ſo doth the famine of the word raiſe the price and eſteem of vulgar and deſpiſed truths. Oh! what would you give for one of thoſe ſermons, one of thoſe ſabbaths we formerly enjoyed! *In thoſe days the word of the Lord was precious.* When God calls to the enemy to take away and remove his contemned, but precious dainties, from his wanton children, and a ſpiritual famine hath a little pinched them, they will then learn to prize their ſpiritual food at a higher rate.

4. In time of famine ſome perſons ſuffer more than others: it falls heavieſt, and pincheth hardeſt upon the poorer ſort; as long as any thing is to be had for money, the rich will have it. So it falls out in a ſpiritual famine; although the moſt experienced and beſt furniſhed Chriſtians will have enough to do to live in the abſence of ordinances, yet they are like to ſubſiſt much better than weak, ignorant, and unexperienced ones. Some Chriſtians have huſbanded their time well, and, like Joſeph in the ſeven years *plenty*, *laid* up for a *ſcarcity*. The word of God dwells richly in them. Some ſuch there are, as John calls young men, who are ſtrong, and the word of God remaineth in them; of whom it may be ſaid, as Jerom ſpake of Nepotianus, that by long and aſſiduous meditation of the ſcriptures, he had made his breaſt the very library of Chriſt. But others are babes in Chriſt; and though God will preſerve that good work which he hath begun in them, yet theſe poor babes will ſooneſt find, and be moſt concerned in the loſs of their ſpiritual fathers and nurſes.

5. In time of famine there are pitiful cries, and heart-breaking complaints wherever you go. Oh the many pale faces you ſhall then ſee, and the ſad language that rings in your ears in every place! One cries, Bread, bread, for Chriſt's ſake! one bit of bread! another faints and falls down at your door. *All her people ſigh*, Lam. i. 11. Yea, the poor little ones are brought in, ver. 12. crying to their mothers, Where is the corn and wine? and then pouring out their

* *Jejunus ſtomachus raro vulgaria temnit.* Horat.

ſouls into their mother's boſom. Juſt ſo it is in a famine of the word; poor Chriſtians every where ſighing and crying, Oh! where are our godly miniſters? our ſweet ſabbaths, ſermons, ſacraments? My fathers! my fathers! the chariots of Iſrael, and the horſemen thereof! How beautiful were your feet upon the mountains? And then, weeping, like the people at Paul's *departure*, to think they ſhall ſee their faces no more.

6. Laſtly, In time of famine there is nothing ſo coſtly or precious, but the people will part with it to purchaſe bread. "They have "given their pleaſant things for meat to relieve their ſouls," Lam. i. 11. And, doubtleſs, when a ſpiritual famine ſhall pinch hard, thoſe that have been cloſe-handed to maintain a goſpel-miniſtry, will account it a choice mercy to enjoy them again at any rate. "Though "the Lord feed you with the bread of affliction, and give you the "waters of adverſity; yet it will ſweeten that bread and water to you, "if your teachers be no more removed into corners," Iſa. xxx. 20.

REFLECTIONS

*The ungrateful ſoul's reflection.*

1. Is the famine of the word ſuch a fearful judgment? Then Lord pardon my unthankfulneſs, for the plentiful and long-continued enjoyment of ſuch a precious and invaluable mercy. How long lightly have I eſteemed the great things of the goſpel! O that with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, I might bleſs the Lord that ever I was brought forth in an age of ſo much light, in a valley of viſions, in a land flowing with goſpel-mercies! "Hath not God made of one blood all the nations of "men to dwell on the face of the earth? And determined the times "before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation?" Acts xvii. 26. Many of theſe great and populous nations are involved in groſs darkneſs. Now that of all the ſeveral ages of the world, and places in it, God ſhould eſpy the beſt place for me, and bring me forth in it, in ſuch a happy nick of time, as can hardly be paralleled in hiſtory for the plenty of goſpel-mercies that this age and nation hath enjoyed; that my mother did not bring me forth in the deſerts of Arabia, or waſtes of America, but in England, where God hath made the ſun of the goſpel to ſtand ſtill, as the natural ſun once did over Gibeon; and that ſuch a mercy ſhould no more affect my ſoul, let ſhame cover my face for this, and trembling ſeize my heart!

*The deprived Chriſtian's reflection.*

2. Is the goſpel indeed departed? Its ſweet influences reſtrained? and a famine, worſe than that of bread, come upon us? *Alas for the day! for it is a great day, ſo that none is like it; it is even the day of Jacob's trouble!* Woe is me, that ever I ſhould ſurvive the goſpel, and the precious liberties and mercies of it! What horrid ſins have been harboured amongſt us, for which the Lord contends by ſuch an unparalleled judgment? Lord, let me juſtify thee, even in

this ſevere diſpenſation; the provocation of thy ſons and of thy daughters have been very great, and amongſt them none greater than mine. May we not this day read our ſin in our puniſhment? O what nice and wanton appetites what curious and itching ears had thy people in the days of plenty! Methods, tones, and geſtures were more regarded than the excellent treaſures of divine truths. Ah, my ſoul! I remember my fault this day; little did I then conſider, that ſermons work not upon hearts, as they are thus elegant, thus admirable, but as they are inſtruments in the hand of God appointed to ſuch an end. Even as Auſtin ſaid of the conduits of water, though one be in the ſhape of an angel, another of a beaſt, yet the water refreſhes as it is water, and not as it comes from ſuch a conduit: by this alſo, O Lord, thou rebukeſt the ſupineneſs and formality of thy people. How drowſy, dull, and careleſs have they been under the moſt excellent and quickening means? Few more than I. Alas! I have often preſented my body before the Lord in ordinances, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἔξω, but my ſoul hath been wandering abroad, as Chryſoſtom ſpeaks. I ſhould have come from under every ſermon, as a ſheet comes from the preſs, with all the ſtamps and lively impreſſions of the truths I have heard upon my heart. But, alas! if it had been demanded of me, as once it was of Ariſtotle, after a long and curious oration, how he liked it? I might have anſwered, as he did, truly I did not hear it, for I was all the while minding another matter. Righteous art thou, O Lord, in all that is come upon us!

3. I am now as a ſpring ſhut up, that can yield no refreſhment to thirſty ſouls, ready to periſh. Thou haſt ſaid to me as once to Ezekiel, "Son of man, behold, I will "make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, "and thou ſhalt be dumb." This is a very heavy judgment; but thou muſt be juſtified and cleared in it. Although men may not, yet God, if he pleaſe, may put a lighted candle under a buſhel. And herein I muſt acknowledge thy righteouſneſs. Many times have I been ſinfully ſilent, when both thy glory and the intereſt of ſouls engaged me to ſpeak. Moſt juſtly therefore haſt thou made my tongue to cleave to its roof. Little did I conſider the preciouſneſs of ſouls, or the tremendous account to be given for them, at the appearing of the great Shepherd. I have now time enough to ſit down and mourn over former miſcarriages and loſt opportunities. Lord, reſtore me once again to a ſerviceable capacity, to a larger ſphere of activity for thee, for I am now become as a broken veſſel. It grieves me to the heart to ſee thy flock ſcattered; to hear the people cry to me, as once to Joſeph, "Give us bread; for why ſhould we die in "thy preſence?" The word is like fire ſhut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing. Oh! that thou wouldſt once again open the doors of thine houſe, that there may be bread enough in thine houſe for all thy children.

*The ſilent miniſter's reflection.*

## THE POEM.

WHEN God doth make the heavens above as braſs,
The earth's like iron; flowers, herbs and graſs
Have loſt their fragrant green, are turned yellow;
The brooks are dry, the pining cattle bellow;
The fat and flow'ry meadows ſcorch'd and burn'd;
The country's mirth is into mourning turn'd;
The clefted earth her thirſty mouth ſets ope
Unto the empty clouds, as 'twere in hope
Of ſome refreſhing drops, that might allay
Her fiery thirſt; but they ſoon paſs away;
The penſive huſbandman with his own eyes
Bedews his land, becauſe he ſees the ſkies
Refuſe to do it. Juſt ſo ſtands the caſe,
When God from ſouls removes the means of grace.
God's miniſters are clouds, their doctrine rain,
Which when the Lord in judgment ſhall reſtrain,
The people's ſouls in ſhort time will be found
In ſuch a caſe as this dry parched ground.
When this ſad judgment falls on any nation,
Let ſaints therein take up this lamentation.

O dreadful, dark, and diſmal day!
How is our glory fled away?
Our ſun gone down, our ſtars o'ercaſt?
God's heritage is now laid waſte.

Our pining ſouls no bread can get;
With wantons God has juſtly met.
When we were fed unto the full,
This man was tedious, that was dull:
But they are gone, and there remain
No ſuch occaſions to complain.
Stars are not now for lights, but ſigns,
God knows of what heart-breaking times.
Sure heaven intends not peace, but wars,
In calling home ambaſſadors.
How long did Sodom's judgments ſtay,
When righteous Lot was ſnatch'd away?
How long remain'd that ſtately hall,
When Samſon made the pillars fall?
When horſemen and commanders fly,
Woe to the helpleſs infantry.
This is a ſad and fatal blow,
A public loſs and overthrow.
You that ſo long have wiſh'd them gone,
Be quiet now, the thing is done:
Did they torment you e're your day?

God hath remov'd them out o'th' way.
Now ſleep in ſin, and take your eaſe;
Their doctrine ſhall no more diſpleaſe.
But, Lord! what ſhall become of us?
Our teacher's gone, and left us thus:
To whom ſhall we ourſelves addreſs,
When conſcience labours in diſtreſs?
Oh! who ſhall help us out at need?
Or pour in balm when wounds do bleed?
Help, Lord! for unto thee our eyes
Do pour out tears; our groans, our cries
Shall never ceaſe, 'till thou reſtore
The mercies which we had before;
'Till Sion's paths, where graſs now grows,
Be trodden by the feet of thoſe
That love thy name, and long t' enjoy
The mercies they have ſinn'd away.

## CHAP. XI.

### Upon the Corruption of the Seed before it ſprings.

*Seeds die and rot, and then muſt freſh appear;*
*Saint's bodies riſe more orient than they were.*

#### OBSERVATION.

AFTER the ſeed is committed to the earth, it ſeems to periſh and die, as our Saviour ſpeaks, John xii. 24. "Except a corn "of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it "die, it brings forth much fruit." The death of the corn in the earth is not a total death, but only the corruption or alteration of it: for if once the ſeminal life and virtue of it were quite extinguiſhed, it could never put forth blade or ear without a miracle. Yet becauſe that alteration is a kind of death, therefore Chriſt here uſes it as a fit illuſtration of the reſurrection. And indeed there is nothing in nature more apt to illuſtrate that great myſtery. What a fragrant, green, and beautiful blade do we ſee ſpring up from a corrupted ſeed? How black and mouldy is that! How beautiful and verdant is this?

#### APPLICATION.

EVEN thus ſhall the bodies of the ſaints ariſe in beauty and glory at the reſurrection: "They are ſown in diſhonour; they "are raiſed in glory; they are ſown natural bodies; they are raiſed "ſpiritual bodies," 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. The huſbandman knows,

that though the seed rot in the earth, yet it will rise again. And the believer knows, "that though after his skin worms destroy his bo-"dy, yet in his flesh he shall see God," Job xix. 25, &c. And the resemblance betwixt the seed sown, and springing up; and the bodies of the saints dying, and rising again, lies in these following particulars.

1. The seed is committed to the earth from whence it came; so is the body of a saint; earth it was, and to earth it is again resolved. Grace exempts not the body of the best man from seeing corruption, Rom. viii. 10. Though Christ be in him, yet the body is dead; that is, sentenced to death, because of sin, Heb. ix. 27. "But it is ap-"pointed for all men once to die."

2. The seed is cast into the earth in hope, 1 Cor. ix. 10. Were there not a resurrection of it expected, the husbandman would never be willing to cast away his corn. The bodies of saints are also committed to the grave in hope, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. "But I would not "have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those which are "asleep, as they which have no hope; for if we believe that Je-"sus died, and rose again, so even also them which sleep in Jesus, "shall the Lord bring with him." This blessed hope of a resurrection sweetens not only the troubles of life, but the pangs of death.

3. The seed is cast into the earth seasonably, in its proper season: so are the bodies of the saints, Job v. 26. "Thou shalt come to thy "grave in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh in, in its season." They always die in the fittest time, though sometimes they seem to die immaturely: the time of their death was from all eternity prefixed by God, beyond which they cannot go, and short of which they cannot come.

4. The seed lies many days and nights under the clods, before it rise and appear again; "even so man lieth down, and riseth not "again until the heavens be no more," Job xiv. 12. The days of darkness in the grave are many.

5. When the time is come for its shooting up, the earth that covered it can hide it no longer; it cannot keep it down a day more; it will find or make way through the clods. So in that day when the great trump shall sound, bone shall come to its bone, and the grave shall not be able to hold them a minute longer. Both sea and earth must render the dead that are in them, Rev. xx. 13.

6. When the seed appears above-ground, it appears much more fresh and orient, than when it was cast into the earth: God clothes it with such beauty, that it is not like to what it was before. Thus rise the bodies of the saints, marvellously improved, beautified, and perfected with spiritual qualities and rich endowments; in respect whereof they are called spiritual bodies, 1 Cor. xv. 43. not properly, but analogically spiritual; for look, as spirits subsist with-

out food, raiment, ſleep, know no laſſitude, wearineſs or pain; ſo our bodies, after the reſurrection, ſhall be above theſe neceſſities and diſtempers; for we ſhall be as the angels of God, Matth. xxii. 30. Yea, our vile bodies ſhall be changed, and made like unto Chriſt's glorious body; which is the higheſt pitch and aſcent of glory and honour that an human body is capable of, Phil. iii. 21. Indeed, the glory of the ſoul ſhall be the greateſt glory; that is the orient invaluable gem: But God will beſtow a diſtinct glory upon the body, and richly enamel the very caſe in which that precious jewel ſhall be kept. In that glorious morning of the reſurrection, the ſaints ſhall put on their new freſh ſuits of fleſh, richly laid and trimmed with glory. Thoſe bodies, which in the grave were but duſt and rottenneſs, when it delivers them back again, ſhall be ſhining and excellent pieces, abſolutely and everlaſtingly freed. (1.) From all natural infirmities and diſtempers: Death is their good phyſician, which at once freed them of all diſeaſes. It is a great affliction now to many of the Lord's people, to be clogged with ſo many bodily infirmities, which render them very unſerviceable to God. *The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak.* A crazy body retorts and ſhoots back its diſtempers upon the ſoul, with which it is ſo cloſely conjoined: But though now the ſoul (as Theophraſtus ſpeaks) pays a dear rent for the tabernacle in which it dwells; yet, when death diſſolves that tabernacle, all the diſeaſes and pains, under which it groaned, ſhall be buried in the rubbiſh of its mortality; and when they come to be re-united again, God will beſtow rich gifts and dowries, even upon the body, in the day of its re-eſpouſals to the ſoul. (2.) It ſhall be freed from all deformities; there are no breaches, flaws, monſtroſities in glorified bodies; but of them it may much rather be ſaid what was once ſaid of Abſalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 25. "That from the crown of "the head to the ſole of his foot, there was no blemiſh in him." (3.) It ſhall be freed from all natural neceſſities, to which it is now ſubjected in this its animal ſtate. How is the ſoul now diſquieted and tortured with cares and troubles to provide for a periſhing body? Many unbelieving and unbecoming fears it is now vexed with: What ſhall it eat? And what ſhall it drink? And wherewithal ſhall it be clothed? "But meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; God "ſhall deſtroy both it and them," 1 Cor. vi. 13. i. e. as to their preſent uſe and office; for as to its exiſtence, ſo the belly ſhall not be deſtroyed. But even as the maſts, poop and ſtern of a ſhip abide in the harbour after the voyage is ended, ſo ſhall theſe bodily members, as Tertullian excellently illuſtrates it. (4.) They ſhall be freed from death, to which thenceforth they can be ſubject no more; that formidable adverſary of nature ſhall aſſault it no more. "For they "which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the re-"ſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; "neither can they die any more; for they ſhall be equal to the an-

" gels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resur-
" rection," Luke xx. 35, 36. Mark it (equal to the angels) not that they shall be separate and single spirits, without bodies as the angels are: but equal to them in the way and manner of their living and acting.* We shall then live upon God, and act freely, purely, and delightfully for God; for all kind of living upon, and delighting in creatures, seems in that text (by a synecdoche of the part which is ordinarily in scripture put for all creature-delights, dependencies, and necessities) to be excluded. Nothing but God shall enamour and fill the soul; and the body shall be perfectly subdued to the spirit. Lord, what hast thou prepared for them that love thee!

REFLECTIONS.

*The healthful saint's reflection.*

1. If I shall receive my body again so dignified and improved in the world to come, then Lord let me never be unwilling to use my body now for the interest of thy glory, or my own salvation! Now, O my God, it grieves me to think how many precious opportunities of serving and honouring thee I have lost, under pretence of endangering my health!

I have been more solicitous to live long and healthfully, than to live usefully and fruitfully; and, like enough, my life had been more serviceable to thee, if it had not been so fondly overvalued by me.

Foolish soul! hath God given thee a body for a living tool or instrument? And art thou afraid to use it? Wherein is the mercy of having a body, if not in spending and wearing it out in the service of God? To have an active vigorous body, and not to employ and exercise it for God, for fear of endangering its health, is, as if one should give thee a handsome and sprightly horse, upon condition thou shouldst not ride or work him. O! if some of the saints had enjoyed the blessing of such an healthy active body as mine, what excellent services would they have performed to God in it?

*The sickly saint's reflection.*

2. If my body shall as surely rise again in glory, vigour, and excellent endowments, as the seed which I sow doth; why should not this comfort me over all the pains, weaknesses, and dulness, with which my soul is now clogged? Thou knowest, my God, what a grief it hath been to my soul, to be fettered and entangled with the distempers and manifold indispositions of this vile body: It hath made me sigh, and say with holy Anselme, when he saw the mounting bird weighed down by the stone hanging at her leg, Lord, thus it fares with the soul of thy servant! Fain would I serve, glorify, and enjoy thee, but a distempered body will not let me. However, it is reviving to think, that though I am now forced to crawl like a

* Ισαγγελως Βιωντες.

worm, in the discharge of my duties, I shall shortly fly, like a seraphim in the execution of thy will. Cheer up, drooping soul; the time is at hand when thou shalt be made more willing than thou art, and thy flesh not so weak as now it is.

*The dying saint's reflection.*

3. And is it so indeed? Then let the dying saint, like Jacob, rouze up himself upon his bed, and encourage himself against the fears of death by this refreshing consideration. Let him say with holy dying Musculus; why tremblest thou, O my soul, to go forth of this tabernacle to the land of rest? Hath thy body been such a pleasant habitation to thee, that thou shouldst be so loth to part with it, though but for a time, and with assurance of receiving it again with such a glorious improvement? I know, O my soul, that thou hast a natural inclination to this body, resulting from the dear and strict union which God himself hath made betwixt thee and it; yea, even the holiest of men do sometimes sensibly feel the like in themselves; but beware thou love it not immoderately or inordinately; it is but a creature, how dear soever it be to thee; yea, a fading creature, and that which now stands in thy way to the full enjoyment of God. But say, my soul, why are the thoughts of parting with it so burdensome to thee? Why so loth to take death by its cold hand? Is this body thy old and dear friend? True, but yet thou partest not with it upon such sad terms as should deserve a tear at parting. For mayest thou not say of this departure, as Paul at the departure of Onesimus? Philem. ver. 15. "It therefore departeth for a season, that thou mayest receive it for "ever." The day of re-espousals will quickly come; and in the mean time, as thy body shall not be sensible of the tedious length of interposing time, so neither shalt thou be solicitous about thine absent friend; for the fruition of God in thine unbodied state, shall fill thee with infinite satisfaction and rest.

Or is it not so much simply for parting with it, as for the manner of thy parting, either by the slow and lingering approaches of a natural or the quick and terrible approaches of a violent death: Why trouble not thyself about that; for if God lead thee through the long dark lane of a tedious sickness, yet at the end of it is thy Father's house. And for a violent death, it is not so material whether friends or enemies stand weeping or triumphing over thy dead body. *Nihil corpus sensit in nervo cum anima sit in cœlo.* When thy soul shall be in heaven, it will not be sensible how the body is used on earth.

*The ungodly soul's reflection.*

4. But oh! what an uncomfortable parting will mine be! and how much more sad our meeting again! how will this soul and body blush, yea, tremble when they meet, who have been co-partners in so much guilt? I damned my soul to please my flesh, and now have ruined both thereby: Had I denied my flesh to serve Christ, worn out my body in the service of my soul, I had thereby happily provi-

ded for them both; but I began at the wrong end, and ſo have ruined both eternally.

## THE POEM.

BARE ſeeds have no great beauty, but, inhum'd,
That which they had is loſt, and quite conſum'd;
They ſoon corrupt and grow more baſe, by odds,
When dead and bury'd underneath the clods:
It falls in baſeneſs, but at length doth riſe
In glory which delights beholders eyes.
How great a difference have a few days made,
Betwixt it, in the buſhel and the blade!
This lovely, lively emblem aptly may
Type out the glorious reſurrection-day;
Wherein the ſaints that in the duſt do lie,
Shall riſe in glory, vigour, dignity;
With ſinging, in that morning they ariſe,
And dazzle glory, ſuch as mortal eyes
Ne'er view'd on earth. The ſparkling beauties here,
No more can equalize their ſplendor there,
Than glimmering glow-worms do the faireſt ſtar
That ſhines in heaven, or the ſtones that are
In ev'ry ſtreet, may competition hold
With glittering diamonds in rings of gold.
For unto Chriſt's moſt glorious body they
Shall be conform'd in glory at that day;
Whoſe luſtre would, ſhould it on mortals fall,
Tranſport a Stephen, and confound a Paul.
'Tis now a coarſe and crazy houſe of clay;
But, oh! how dear do ſouls for lodgings pay!
Few more than I: For thou, my ſoul, haſt been
Within theſe tents of Kedar cooped in;
Where, with diſtempers clogg'd, thou mak'ſt thy moans,
And, for deliverance, with tears and groans
Haſt often ſu'd: Cheer up, the time will be
When thou from all theſe troubles ſhall be free:
No jarring humours, cloudy vapours, rheums,
Pains, aches, or whatever elſe conſumes
My days in grief; whilſt in the Chriſtian race,
Fleſh lags behind, and can't keep equal pace
With the more willing ſpirit: Non of theſe
Shall thenceforth clog thee, or diſturb thine eaſe.

## CHAP. XII.

### Upon the Reſemblance of Wheat and Tares.

*As wheat reſembled is by viler tares;*
*So vile hypocriſy like grace appears.*

#### OBSERVATION.

IT is Jerom's obſervation, that wheat and tares are ſo much alike in their firſt ſpringing up, that it is exceedingly difficult to diſtinguiſh the one from the other: Theſe are his words, *Inter triticum et zizanium quandiu herba eſt, et nondum culmus venit ad ſpicam; grandis ſimilitudo eſt; et indiſcernendo aut nulla, aut per difficilis diſtantia.* The difference (ſaith he) between them, is either none at all, or wonderfully difficult to diſcern, which thoſe words of Chriſt, Mat. xiii. 30. plainly confirm. Let them both alone till the harveſt; thereby intimating both the difficulty of diſtinguiſhing the tares and wheat; as alſo the unwarrantable raſhneſs of bold and haſty cenſures of men's ſincerity or hypocriſy, which is there ſhadowed by them.

#### APPLICATION.

HOW difficult ſoever it be to diſcern the difference betwixt wheat and tares, yet, doubtleſs, the eye of ſenſe can much eaſier diſcriminate them, than the moſt quick and piercing eye of man can diſcern the difference betwixt ſpecial and common grace; for all ſaving graces in the ſaints have their counterfeits in hypocrites. There are *ſimilar works* in theſe, which a ſpiritual and very judicious eye may eaſily miſtake for the *ſaving and genuine effects* of the ſanctifying Spirit.

Doth the Spirit of God convince the conſciences of his people of the evil of ſin? Rom. vii. 9. Hypocrites have their convictions too, Exod. x. 16. "Then Pharaoh called for Moſes and Aaron in haſte; "and he ſaid, I have ſinned againſt the Lord your God, and againſt "you." Thus was Saul alſo convicted, 1 Sam. xv. 24.

Doth true conviction and compunction work reformation of life in the people of God? Even hypocrites alſo have been famous for their reformations. The unclean ſpirit often goes out of the formal hypocrite, by an external reformation; and yet ſtill retains his propriety in them, Matth. xii. 43, 44. For that departure is indeed no more than a politic retreat. Many that ſhall never eſcape the damnation of hell, have yet eſcaped the pollutions of the world, and that by the knowledge of the Son of God, 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Doth the Spirit of the Lord produce that glorious and ſupernatural work of faith in convinced and humble ſouls? In this alſo the hypocrite apes and imitates the believer, Acts viii. 13. "Then Simon

" himſelf believed alſo." Luke viii. 13. " Theſe are they whic
" for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

Doth the precious eye of faith, diſcovering the tranſcendent excel
lencies that are in Chriſt, enflame the affections of the believing ſou
with vehement deſires and longings after him? Strange motions o
heart have alſo been found in hypocrites towards Chriſt and heaven
ly things, John vi. 34. " Lord, evermore give us this bread." Matth
xxv. 8. " Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." Wit
what a rapture was Balaam tranſported, when he ſaid, " Let me di
" the death of the righteous, and my laſt end be like his!" Numb
xxiii. 10.

Doth the work of faith, in ſome believers, bear upon its top branch
es the full ripe fruit of a bleſſed aſſurance? Lo! what ſtrong confi
dences and high-built perſuaſions of an intereſt in God, have ſome
times been found even in unſanctified ones? John viii. 54. " Y
" whom you ſay, that he is your God; and yet ye have not known
" him." To the ſame height of confidence arrived thoſe vain ſou
mentioned in Rom. ii. 19. Yea, ſo ſtrong may this falſe aſſuranc
be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment-ſeat of God
and there defend it, Mat. vii. 22. " Lord, Lord, have we not prophe
" ſied in thy name?"

Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the aſſured believer with
joy unſpeakable and full of glory, giving them, *through faith*, a pre
libation, or foretaſte of heaven itſelf, in thoſe firſt fruits of it? How
near to this comes that which the apoſtle ſuppoſes may be found even
in *apoſtates*, Heb. vi. 8, 9. who are there ſaid " to taſte the good word
" of God, and the powers of the world to come." What ſhall I ſay,
if real Chriſtians delight in ordinances, thoſe that are none may alſo
delight in approaching to God, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. It may be you will
ſay, though the difference be not eaſily diſcernible in their active
obedience, yet, when it ſhall come to ſuffering, there every eye
may diſcern it; the falſe heart will then flinch, and cannot brook that
work. And yet even this is no infallible rule neither; for the apoſ
tle ſuppoſes, that the *ſalamander* of hypocriſy may live in the very
flames of martyrdom, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. " If I give my body to be burnt,
" and have not charity." And it was long ſince determined in this
caſe, *Non pœna, ſed cauſa facit martyrem*; ſo, that without controver-
ſy, the difficulty of diſtinguiſhing them is very great.

And this difference will yet be more ſubtle and undiſcernible, if
I ſhould tell you, that as in ſo many things the hypocrite reſembles
the ſaint; ſo there are other things in which a real Chriſtian may act
too like an hypocrite. When we find a Pharaoh confeſſing, an He-
rod practiſing, as well as hearing, a Judas preaching Chriſt, and an A-
lexander venturing his life for Paul; and, on the other ſide, ſhall
find a David condemning that in another which he practiſed himſelf,
an Hezekiah glorying in his riches, a Peter diſſembling, and even all
the diſciples forſaking Chriſt in an hour of trouble and danger: O

then! how hard is it for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat? How many upright hearts are now censured, whom God will clear? How many false hearts are now approved, whom God will condemn? Men ordinarily have no clear convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms; which, at most, can beget but a conjectural knowledge of another's state. And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright; or, on the other side, absolve and justify the wicked. And truly, considering what hath been said, it is no great wonder that dangerous mistakes are so frequently made in this matter. But though man cannot, the Lord both can and will, perfectly discriminate them. "The Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. He will have a day perfectly to sever the tares from the wheat, to melt off the varnish of the most resplendent and refined hypocrite, and to blow off the ashes of infirmities, which have covered and obscured the very sparks of sincerity in his people: he will make such a division as was never yet made in the world, how many divisions soever there have been in it. "And then shall men indeed return, and discern between the "righteous and the wicked; betwixt him that serveth God, and "him that serveth him not." Meanwhile, my soul, thou canst not better employ thyself, whether thou be found or unsound, than in making those reflections upon thyself.

REFLECTIONS.

*The censorious soul's reflection.*

And is this so? Then, Lord, pardon the rashness and precipitancy of my censorious spirit; for I have often boldly anticipated thy judgment, and assumed thy prerogative, although thou hast said, "Why dost thou judge thy brother? And why dost thou set at "nought thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment-seat "of Christ. For it is written, As I live (saith the Lord) every knee "shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. Let us "not therefore judge one another any more," Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12, 13. And again; "He that judgeth me is the Lord. Let us there-"fore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make mani-"fest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have "praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5.

What if God will own some of them for his sons, to whom I refuse to give the respect of brethren? I may pass hasty and headlong censures upon others; but where is my commission for so doing? I want not only a commission, but fit qualifications for such a work as this. Can I pierce into the heart as God? Can I infallibly discover the hidden motives, ends, and principles of actions? Besides, O my soul, thou art conscious of so much falseness in thyself, that were there no other consideration, that alone might restrain thee from all uncharitable and hasty censures. If others knew but what I know of myself,

would they not judge as ſeverely of me as I do of others?

*The preſumptuous ſoul's reflection.*

2. Though I may not judge the final ſtate of another, yet I may, and ought to judge the ſtate of my own ſoul; which is, doubtleſs, a more neceſſary and concerning work to me. For ſince every ſaving grace in a Chriſtian hath its counterfeit in the hypocrite, how needful is it for thee, O my ſoul, to make a ſtand here, and ſolemnly to ponder this queſtion, Whether thoſe things, whereon I depend, as my beſt evidences for the life to come, be the real, or only the common works of the Spirit? Whether they may be ſuch as can now endure the teſt of the word, and abide a fair trial at the bar of my own conſcience?

Come then, my ſoul, ſet the Lord before thee, to whom the ſecrets of all hearts are manifeſt: and in the awful ſenſe of that great day make true anſwer to theſe heart-diſcovering queries: For though thou canſt not diſcern the difference betwixt theſe things in another, yet thou mayeſt and oughteſt to diſcern it in thyſelf: For what man knows the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man that is in him!

1. Is my obedience uniform? am I the ſame man at all times, places, and companies? Or rather, am I not exact and curious in open and public, remiſs and careleſs in private and ſecret duties? Sincere ſouls are uniform ſouls, Pſal. cxix. 6. the hypocrite is no cloſet-man, Matth. vi. 5.

2. Doth that which I call grace in me oppoſe and mortify, or doth it not rather quietly conſiſt with, and protect my luſts and corruptions? True grace tolerates no luſt, Gal. v. 17. No, not the boſom, darling corruptions, Pſal. xviii. 23.

3. Doth that which I call my grace, humble, empty, and abaſe my ſoul? Or rather, doth it not puff it up with ſelf-conceitedneſs? All ſaving grace is humbling grace, 1 Cor. xv. 10. "But the ſoul which "is lifted up, is not upright," Hab. ii. 4.

Laſtly, Canſt thou, my ſoul, rejoice and bleſs God for the grace imparted to others? And rejoice if any deſign for Chriſt be carried on in the world by other hands? Or, rather, doſt thou not envy thoſe that excel thee, and careſt for no work in which thou art not ſeen?

But ſtay, my ſoul, it is enough: If theſe be the ſubſtantial differences betwixt ſpecial and common grace, I more than doubt, I ſhall not endure the day of his coming, *Whoſe fan is in his hand.* Do not thoſe ſpots appear upon me, which are not the ſpots of his children? Woe is me, poor wretch! the characters of death are upon my ſoul! Lord add power to the form, life to the name to live, practice to the knowledge, or I periſh eternally! O rather give me the *ſaint's heart* than the *angel's tongue;* the pooreſt breathing of the Spirit than the richeſt ornaments of common gifts! Let me never deceive myſelf or others in matters of ſo deep and everlaſting conſequence.

## THE POEM.

IN eaſtern countries, as good authors write,
Tares, in their ſpringing up, appear to fight,
Not like itſelf, a weed, but real wheat;
Whoſe ſhape and form it counterfeits ſo neat,
That 'twould require a moſt judicious eye
The one from t'other to diverſify.
Till both to ſome maturity be grown,
And then the difference is eas'ly known.
Even thus hypocriſy, that curſed weed,
Springs up ſo like true grace, that he will need
More than a common inſight in this caſe,
That ſaith, this is not, that is real grace.
Ne'er did the cunning actor, tho' a ſlave
Array'd in princely robes, himſelf behave
So like a king, as this doth act the part
Of ſaving grace, by its deep helliſh art.
Do gracious ſouls melt, mourn, and weep for ſin?
The like in hypocrites obſerv'd hath been.
Have they their comforts, joys, and raptures ſweet?
With them in comforts hypocrites do meet.
In all religious duties they can go
As far as ſaints, in ſome things farther too;
They ſpeak like angels, and you'll think within,
The very ſpirit of Chriſt and grace hath been.
They come ſo near, that ſome, like Iſaac, take
Jacob for Eſau, this for that miſtake:
And boldly call (their eyes, with his, being dim)
True grace, hypocriſy; and duty, ſin:
Yea, many alſo, Jacob-like, embrace
Leah for Rachel, common gifts for grace:
And in their boſom hug it, 'till the light
Diſcover their miſtake, and clear their ſight:
And then, like him, confounded they will cry;
Alas! 'tis Leah, curs'd hypocriſy!
Guide me, my God, that I may not, inſtead
Of ſaving grace, nurſe up this curſed weed,
O let my heart, at laſt, by thee be found
Sincere, and all thy workings on it ſound!

## CHAP. XIII.

### Upon the Dangers incident to corn from Seed-time to Harveſt.

*Fowls, weeds, and blaſtings do your corn annoy,*
*Even ſo corruptions would your grace deſtroy.*

#### OBSERVATION.

THERE are, amongſt many others, three critical and dangerous periods between the ſeed-time and harveſt. The firſt, when corn is newly committed to the earth, all that lies uncovered is quickly picked up by the birds; and much of that which is but ſlightly covered, is plucked up as ſoon as it begins to ſprout, by rooks, and other devouring fowls, Matth. xiii. 4. But if it eſcape the fowls, and gets root in the earth, yet then it is hazarded by noxious weeds, which purloin and ſuck away its nouriſhment, whilſt it is yet in the tender blade. If by the care of the vigilant huſbandman it be freed from choaking weeds; yet, laſtly, as great a danger as any of the former ſtill attends it; for oftentimes, whilſt it is blowing in the ear, blaſtings and mildews ſmite it in the ſtalk, and cut off the juice and ſap that ſhould aſcend to nouriſh the ear, and ſo ſhrivels and dries up the grain whilſt it is yet immaturate; whereby it becomes like thoſe ears of corn in Pharaoh's viſion, which were thin and blaſted with the eaſt-wind; or like the ears the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of upon the houſe top, wherewith the reaper filleth not his arms.

#### APPLICATION.

TRUE grace, from the infancy to the perfection thereof, conflicts with far greater dangers, amongſt which it anſwerably meets with three dangerous periods which marvellouſly hazard it: So that it is a much greater wonder that it ever arrives at its juſt perfection. For, (1.) No ſooner hath the great Huſbandman diſſeminated theſe holy ſeeds in the regenerate heart, but multitudes of impetuous corruptions immediately aſſault, and would certainly devour them, like the fowls of the air, did not the ſame arm that ſowed them alſo protect them. It fares with grace, as with Chriſt its Author, whom Herod ſought to deſtroy in his very infancy. The new creature is ſcarce warm in its ſeat, before it muſt fight to defend itſelf. This conflict is excellently ſet forth in that famous text, Gal. v. 17. "The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the "fleſh; and theſe are contrary the one to the other, ſo that ye can"not do the things that ye would."

By fleſh here underſtand the corruption of nature by original ſin, and the ſinful motions thereof;—by Spirit, not the ſoul, or natural ſpirit of man, but the Spirit of God in man, viz. thoſe graces in man which are the workmanſhip of the Spirit, and therefore called by his name. The oppoſition betwixt theſe two is expreſſed by luſting, i. e.

deſiring the mutual ruin and deſtruction of each other; for even when they are not acting, yet then they are luſting; there is an oppoſite diſpoſition againſt each other; which oppoſition is both a *formal* and an *effective* oppoſition. There are two contrary forms; two men in every ſaint, Col. iii. 9, 10. From hence an effective oppoſition muſt needs follow; for as things are in their natures and principles, ſo they are in their operations and effects; workings always follow beings; fire and water are of contrary qualities, and when they meet, they effectually oppoſe each other. Sin and grace are ſo oppoſite, that if ſin ſhould ceaſe to oppoſe grace, it would ceaſe to be ſin; and if grace ſhould ceaſe to oppoſe ſin, it would ceaſe to be grace. And this doth much more endanger the work of grace than any other enemy it hath; becauſe it works againſt it more *inwardly*, *conſtantly*, and *advantageouſly*, than any thing elſe can do. (1.) More inwardly, for it hath its being and working in the ſame ſoul where grace dwells; yea, in the ſelf-ſame faculties; ſo that it not only ſets one faculty againſt another, but the ſame faculty againſt itſelf; the underſtanding againſt the underſtanding, and the will againſt the will; ſo that ye cannot do the good, nor yet the evil that ye would; not the good that ye would, becauſe when the ſpirit moveth to good, and beats upon the heart by Divine pulſations, exciting it to duty, the fleſh croſſes and oppoſes it there; and if it cannot totally hinder the performance of a duty, yet it lames the ſoul upon the working-hand, whereby the performance is not ſo ſpiritual, free and compoſed, as it deſires; nor yet the evil that you would commit, if grace were not there; becauſe when luſt ſtirs, in its firſt motions, grace puts a rub in its way. "How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. And if it cannot (which for the moſt part it doth) hinder the acting of ſin, yet it ſo engages the will againſt it, that it is not committed with complacency and full conſent, Rom. vii. 15. "What I "do, I allow not." (2.) It oppoſes it more conſtantly, it is like a continual dropping; a man can no more fly from this enemy than from himſelf. There is a time when the devil leaves tempting, Mat. iv. 11. but no time when corruption ceaſes from working. And, laſtly, It oppoſes grace more *advantageouſly* than any other enemy can do, for it is not only always in the ſame ſoul with it, but it is there naturally; it hath the advantage of the ſoil which ſuits with it. And yet, oh the wonder of free grace! it is not ſwallowed up in victory, but it eſcapes this hazard.

But (2.) It ſoon meets with another, though it eſcapes this, even by temptations, which ſtrike deſperately at the very life of it; for theſe, like the weeds, with ſeemingly-loving embraces, claſp about it; and did not the faithful God now make a way to eſcape, inſtead of an harveſt, we ſhould have an heap? For, alas, what are we! to wreſtle with principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places?

Laſtly, Sad relapſes, like blaſts and ruſtings, do often fade, and

greatly endanger it, when it is even ready for the harveſt. Thus it fell out with David, whoſe laſt ways were not like his firſt; and yet by this theſe holy fruits were not utterly deſtroyed, becauſe it is the ſeed of God, and ſo is immortal, 1 John v. 4, 5. And alſo becauſe the promiſes of perſeverance and victory made to it, cannot be fruſtrated; amongſt which theſe are excellent, Iſa. liv. 10. Jer. xxxiv. 40. 1 Cor. i. 8. Pſal i 3. cxxv. 1. John iv. 15. So that here is matter of unſpeakable comfort; though the fleſh ſay, *Ego deficiam*, I will fail thee; though the world ſay, *Ego decipiam*, I will deceive thee; though the devil ſay, *Ego eripiam*, I will ſnatch thee away; yet as long as Chriſt ſaith, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee, thy graces are ſecure in the midſt of all theſe enemies.

REFLECTIONS.

*The apoſtate's reflection.*

1. This ſoul of mine was once plowed up by conviction, and ſown (as I thought) with the ſeed of God. In thoſe days many purpoſes and good reſolutions began to chink and bud forth, promiſing a bleſſed harveſt: but oh! (with what conſternation and horror ſhould I ſpeak it) the cares and pleaſures of this life, the luſts and corruptions of my baſe heart ſpringing up, have quite deſtroyed and choaked it; by which it appears it was not the ſeed of God, as I then imagined it to be; and now my expected harveſt ſhall be an heap in the day of grief and deſperate ſorrow, Iſa. xvii. 11. I had convictions, but they are gone; troubles for ſin, conſcience of duties, but all is blaſted, and my ſoul is now as a barren field, which God hath curſed.

Woe is me! I have revolted from God, and now that dreadful word, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. is evidently fulfilled upon me; "for I am like "the heath in the deſart, that ſeeth not when good cometh; my "ſoul inhabits the parched places of the wilderneſs." Alas! all my formal and heartleſs duties were but as ſo many ſcare-crows in the field, which could not defend theſe ſlight workings from being devoured by the infernal fowls. Had theſe principles been the ſeed of God, no doubt they would have continued and overcome the world, 1 John ii. 19. Wretched ſoul! thy caſe is ſad; it will be better with the uncultivated wilderneſs, than with ſuch a miſcarrying ſoul, unleſs the great Huſbandman plow thee up the ſecond time, and ſow thy heart with better ſeed.

*The careleſs ſoul's reflection.*

2. And are the corruptions of my heart to grace, what fowls, weeds, and mildews are to the corn? O what need have I then to watch my heart, and keep it with all diligence; for in the life of that grace is wrapt up the life of my ſoul. He that carries a candle in his hand, in a bluſtering, ſtormy night, had need to cover it cloſe, leſt it be blown out, and he left in darkneſs. O let me never ſay, God hath promiſed it ſhall perſevere, and therefore I need not be ſo ſolicitous to preſerve it; for as this inference is quite oppoſite to the nature of true grace and aſſurance, which never encourage to

careleſneſs, but provoke the ſoul to an induſtrious uſe of means to preſerve it; ſo it is in itſelf an irrational and ſenſeleſs concluſion, which will never follow from any ſcripture-promiſe: for although it is readily granted, that God hath made many comfortable and ſweet promiſes to the grace of his people, yet we muſt expect to enjoy the benefits and bleſſings of all thoſe promiſes, in that way and order in which God hath promiſed them; and that is in the careful and diligent uſe of thoſe means which he hath preſcribed, Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37. For promiſes do not exclude, but imply the uſe of means, Acts xxvii. 31. I know my life is determined to a day, to an hour, and I ſhall live out every minute God hath appointed; but yet, I am bound to provide food, raiment, and phyſic to preſerve it.

*The doubting ſoul's reflection.*

To conclude, let all doubting Chriſtians reflect ſeriouſly upon this truth, and ſuck marrow and fatneſs out of it to ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh them againſt all their fears: your life, your ſpiritual life hath for many years hung in ſuſpence before you; and you have often ſaid with David, I ſhall one day fall by the hand of Saul. Deſponding, trembling ſoul! lift up thine eyes, and look upon the fields; the corn lives ſtill, and grows up, though birds have watched to devour it; ſnows have covered it, beaſts have cropped it, weeds have almoſt choaked it, yet it is preſerved. And hath not God more care of that precious ſeed of his own Spirit in thee, than any huſbandman hath of his corn? Hath he not ſaid, "That having begun the good "work in thee, he will perfect it to the day of Chriſt?" Phil. i. 6. Hath he not ſaid, I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, John x. 28. Haſt thou not many times ſaid, and thought of it, as thou doſt now, and yet it lives? O what matter of unſpeakable joy and comfort is this to upright ſouls! Well then, be not diſcouraged, for thou doſt not run as one uncertain, nor fight as one that beats the air, 1 Cor. ix. 26. But the foundation of God ſtands ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knows who are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Though thy grace be weak, thy God is ſtrong; though the ſtream ſeem ſometimes to fail, yet it is fed by an ever-flowing fountain.

## THE POEM.

'TIS juſtly wondered that an ear of corn
Should come at laſt in ſafety to the barn:
It runs through many hazards, threat'ning harms,
Betwixt the ſower's hands and reaper's arms.
The earth no ſooner takes it from the ſack,
But you may ſee behind the ſower's back
A troop of thieves which would at once deſtroy
That ſeed in which lies hid the ſeed of joy.
This dangerous period paſt, it ſoon doth fall
Into a ſecond, no leſs critical.

It ſhooteth forth the tender blade, and then
The noxious weeds endanger it again.
Theſe claſp about it till they kindly choak
The corn, as flattering ivy doth the oak.
Are weeds deſtroy'd, and all that danger paſt?
Lo, now another comes, the worſt at laſt:
For when i' th' ear it blows, begins to kern,
A mildew ſmites it, which you can't diſcern,
Nor any way prevent till all be loſt,
The corn deſtroy'd, with all your hopes and coſt.
Thus ſaving grace, that precious ſeed of joy,
Which hell and nature plot how to deſtroy,
Eſcapes ten thouſand dangers, firſt and laſt,
O who can ſay, now all the danger's paſt?
'Tis like a crazy bark toſs'd in a ſtorm,
Or like a taper which is ſtrangely born
Without a lanthorn in a bluſt'ring night,
Or like to glimmering ſparks, whoſe dying light
is ſtill preſerv'd: the roaring waves ſwell high,
Like moving mountains in the darken'd ſky:
On their proud backs the little bark is even
Mounted unto the battlements of heaven;
From thence diſmounted, to the deeps doth ſlide
Receiving water upon every ſide;
Yet he whoſe voice the proudeſt waves obey,
Brings it at laſt unto the quiet quay:
The bluſt'ring winds ſtrive with a fatal puff,
To bring the taper to a ſtinking ſnuff:
Their churliſh blaſts extinguiſh it, and then
Our gentle breath recovers it again:
The fainting ſparks beneath the aſhes lie,
Where, choak'd and ſmother'd, they begin to die;
But theſe collected, we do gently blow,
Till from faint ſparks to lively flames they grow.
Ev'n thus is grace preſerv'd, thus kept alive;
By conſtant wonders grace doth live and thrive.

## CHAP. XIV.

### Upon the Patience of the Huſbandman for the Harveſt.

*Our huſbandmen for harveſt wait and ſtay:*
*O let not any ſaint do leſs than they!*

#### OBSERVATION.

THE expectation of a good harveſt at laſt, makes the huſbandman, with untired patience, to digeſt all his labours. He that

plows, plows in hope, 1 Cor. vi. 19. And they are not ſo irrational to think they ſhall preſently be partakers of their hope; nor ſo fooliſh to anticipate the harveſt, by cutting down their corn before it be fully ripened: but are content to plow, ſow, and weed it; and when it is fully ripe, then they go forth into their fields, and reap it down with joy.

APPLICATION.

CAN a little corn cauſe men to digeſt ſo many difficult labours, and make them wait with invincible patience till the reaping time come? Much more ſhould the expectation of eternal glory ſteel and fortify my ſpirit againſt all intercurrent hardſhips and difficulties. It leaſt of all becomes a Chriſtian to be of an haſty and impatient ſpirit. "Light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the up-"right in heart," Pſal. xcii. 11. "Behold the huſbandman waiteth," &c. Jam. v. 7. "Be patient, therefore, my brethren, for the coming "of the Lord draws near." There are three great arguments to perſuade Chriſtians to a long-ſuffering and patient frame under ſufferings. (1.) The example of Chriſt, Iſa. liii. 7. To think how quietly he ſuffered all injuries and difficulties with invincible patience, is ſufficient to ſhame the beſt of Chriſtians, who are of ſuch ſhort ſpirits. I have read of one Elezarius, a nobleman, that when his wife wondered at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries, he thus anſwered her: You know ſometimes my heart is ready to riſe with indignation againſt ſuch as wrong me; but I preſently begin to think of the wrongs that Chriſt ſuffered; and ſay thus to myſelf; Although thy ſervant ſhould pluck thy beard, and ſmite thee on thy face, this were nothing to what the Lord ſuffered: he ſuffered more and greater things; and aſſure yourſelf, wife, I never leave off thinking on the injuries done to my Saviour, till ſuch time as my mind be ſtill and quiet. To this purpoſe it was well noted by Bernard, ſpeaking of Chriſt's humiliation, Was Chriſt the Lord of glory thus humbled and emptied of his fulneſs of glory? And ſhall ſuch a worm as I ſwell? (2.) The deſert of ſin, Lam. iii. 39. "Why doth the living "man complain?" It was a good ſaying of the bleſſed Greenham; when ſin lies heavy, affliction lies light. * And it is a famous inſtance which Dr Taylor gives us of the duke of Conde. I have read (ſaith he) when the duke of Conde had voluntarily entered into the incommodities of a religious poverty and retirement, he was one day ſpied and pitied by a Lord of Italy, who, out of tenderneſs wiſhed him to be more careful and nutritive of his perſon. The good duke anſwered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences; for I ſend an harbinger before me, that makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The lord aſked him who was his harbinger? He anſwered, the knowledge of

* Dr Taylor's great Examplar, p. 103.

myſelf, and the conſideration of what I deſerve for my ſins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodgings, how unprovided ſoever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deſerve. (3.) And as the ſenſe of ſin, which merits hell, ſweetens preſent difficulties, ſo (to come home to the preſent ſimilitude) do the expectations and hopes of a bleſſed harveſt and reward in heaven. This made Abraham willing to wander up and down many years as a ſtranger in the world; for he looked for a city that hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. The hopes of ſuch a harveſt is encouragement enough to work hard, and wait long: Yet ſome Chriſtians are ſo impatient of it, that they would fain be reaping before the time: but as God hath, by an unalterable law of nature appointed both the ſeaſons of ſeed-time and harveſt (which are therefore called the appointed weeks of the harveſt) Jer. v. 24. and theſe cannot be haſtened; but when we have done all that we can on our part, muſt wait till God ſend the former and the latter rain, and give every natural cauſe its effect; ſo is it in reference to our ſpiritual harveſt; we are appointed to ſweat in the uſe of all God's appointments; and when we have done all, muſt patiently wait till the divine decrees be accompliſhed, and the time of the promiſe be fully come; "In due "time we ſhall reap, if we faint not." To which patient expectation and quiet waiting for the glory to come, theſe following conſiderations are of excellent uſe.

1. As the huſbandman knows when the ſeed-time is paſt, it will not be long to the harveſt; and the longer he waits, the nearer ſtill it is: ſo the Chriſtian knows, "It is but yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37. "And that "now his ſalvation is nearer than when he firſt believed," Rom. xiii. 11. What a ſmall point of time is our waiting-time, compared with eternity? Yet a few days more, and then comes the long expected and welcome harveſt.

2. The huſbandman can find other work to do before the reaping-time come; he need not ſtand idle, though he cannot yet reap. And cannot a Chriſtian find any work to do for God till he come to heaven? O there is much work to do, and ſuch work is only proper to this ſeaſon! You may now reprove ſin, exhort to duty, ſuccour the diſtreſſed; this is good work, and this is your only time for ſuch work; the whole of eternity will be taken up in other employments. "I think it meet (ſaith Peter) as long as I am in this tabernacle, to "ſtir up your minds, knowing ſhortly that I muſt put off this taber-"nacle," 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. q. d. I know I have but a little time to work among you; I am almoſt at heaven; and therefore am willing to huſband this preſent moment as well as I can for you. O Chriſtians! you need not ſtand idle; look round about you upon the multitude of forlorn ſinners; ſpeak now to them for God; ſpeak now to God for them; for ſhortly you ſhall ſo ſpeak no more; you ſhall ſee them no more till you ſee them at Chriſt's bar; God leaves

you here for their ſakes, up and be doing: if you had done all you were to do for yourſelves and them, he would have you to heaven immediately; you ſhould not wait a moment longer for your glory.

3. Huſbandmen know, though they cannot yet gather in the precious fruits of the earth, yet all this while they are ripening and preparing for the harveſt! they would not houſe it green, or take it before its time. And is not this alſo my preparation-time for glory? As God prepared heaven for his people by an eternal *decree*; Mat. xxv. 34. by an act of *creation*, Heb. xi. 10. by the death of Chriſt, which made a purchaſe of it, Heb. x. 19, 20. and by his aſcenſion into it, John xiv. 2, 3. So the reaſon why we are kept here, is in order to our fitting for it. Heaven is ready, but we are not fully ready; the barn is fit to receive the corn, but the corn is not fit to be gathered into it. "But for this ſelf-ſame thing God is now working "us," 2 Cor. v. 5. he is every day at work by ordinances, and by providences, to perfect his work in us; and as ſoon as that is finiſhed, we ſhall hear a voice like that, Rev. xi. 12. "Come up hither, and "immediately we ſhall be in the ſpirit;" for how ardently ſoever we long for that deſirable day, Chriſt longs for it more than we can do.

4. The huſbandman is glad of the firſt-fruits, that encourages him, though the greateſt part be yet out: and have not you received the firſt fruits of that glory? Have you not earneſts, pledges, and firſt-fruits of it? 'Tis your own fault, if every day you feed not upon ſuch bleſſed comforts of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23 Rom. v. 2. 1 Pet. viii. 9. O how might the interpoſing time, even all the days of your patience here be ſweetened with ſuch prelibations of the glory to come!

5. Huſbandmen know it is beſt to reap when it is fit to reap; one handful fully ripe is worth many ſheaves of green corn. And you know, heaven will be ſweeteſt to you when you are fitteſt for it; the child would pluck the apple whilſt it is green, but he might gather it eaſier, and taſte it ſweeter, by tarrying longer for it. We would fain be glorified *per ſaltum*. When we have got a taſte of heaven, we are all in haſte to be gone. Then, O that I had wings as a dove! I would fly away and be at reſt. Then we cry to God for ourſelves, as Moſes for his ſiſter Miriam, "Heal her [now] O God, I be-"ſeech thee!" Numb. xii. 13. Glorify me now, O Lord, I pray thee! But, ſurely, as God hath contrived thy glory in the beſt of ways; ſo he hath appointed for thee the fitteſt of ſeaſons; and whenever thou art gathered into glory, thou ſhalt come as a ſhock of corn in its ſeaſon.

REFLECTIONS.

I have waited for thy ſalvation, O God! Having received thy firſt-fruits, my ſoul longs to fill its boſom with the full ripe ſheaves of glory: "As *The longing ſoul's reflection.*

" the hart panteth for the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul for thee, " O God! O when ſhall I come and appear before God!" I deſire to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt! When ſhall I ſee that moſt lovely face? When ſhall I hear his ſoul-tranſporting voice! Some need patience to die: I need it as much to live. Thy ſights, O God, by faith, have made this world a burden, this body a burden, and this ſoul to cry, like thirſty David, " O that one would " give me of the waters of Bethlehem to drink!" The huſbandman longs for his harveſt, becauſe it is the reward of all his toil and labour. But what is his harveſt to mine? What is a little corn to the enjoyment of God? What is the joy of harveſt to the joy of heaven? What are the ſhoutings of men in the fields to the acclamations of glorified ſpirits in the kingdom of God? Lord, I have gone forth, bearing more precious ſeed than they; when ſhall I return rejoicing, bringing my ſheaves with me? Their harveſt comes when they receive their corn; mine comes when I leave it. O much deſired! O day of gladneſs of my heart! How long, Lord! how long! Here I wait as the poor man at Bethesda's pool, looking when my turn will come, but every one ſteps into heaven before me; yet, Lord, I am content to wait till my time is fully come: I would be content to ſtay for my *glorification* till I have finiſhed the work of my *generation;* and when I have done the will of God, then to receive the promiſe. If thou have any work on earth to uſe me in, I am content to abide: behold, the huſbandman waiteth, and ſo will I; for thou art a God of judgment; and bleſſed are all they that wait for thee.

*The lingering ſoul's reflection.*

But how doth my ſlothful ſoul ſink down into the fleſh, and ſettle itſelf in the love of this animal life? How doth it hug and wrap up itſelf in the garment of this mortality, not deſiring to be removed hence to the more perfect and bleſſed ſtate? The huſbandman is indeed content to ſtay till the appointed weeks of the harveſt; but would he be content to wait always? O my ſenſual heart! is this life of hope as contentful to thee as the life of viſion will be? Why doſt thou not groan within thyſelf, that this mortality might be ſwallowed up of life? Doth not the ſcriptures deſcribe the ſaints by their earneſt looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life? Jude 21. " By their haſtening unto the coming of the day of " God," 2 Pet. iii. 12. What is the matter, that my heart hangs back? Doth guilt lie upon my conſcience? Or, have I gotten into a pleaſant condition in the world, which makes me ſay as Peter on the mount, *It is good to be here?* Or want I the aſſurance of a better ſtate? Muſt God make all my earthly comforts die, before I ſhall be willing to die? Awake faith, awake my love; beat up the drowſy deſires of my ſoul, that I may ſay, " Make haſte my beloved, and " come away."

## THE POEM.

NO prudent huſbandman expects
The fruit of what he ſows,
'Till every cauſe have its effects,
And then he reaps and mows:
He works in hope the ear throughout,
And counts no labour loſt,
If, when the ſeaſon comes about,
His harveſt quits his coſt.
His rare example juſtly may
Rebuke and put to ſhame
My ſoul; which ſows its ſeed one day,
And looks to reap the ſame.
Is curſed nature now become
So kind a ſoil to grace,
That to perfection it ſhould come
Within ſo ſhort a ſpace?
Grace ſprings not up with ſeed and eaſe,
Like muſhrooms in a night;
But rather by degrees increaſe,
As doth the morning light.
Is corn ſo dear to huſbandmen?
Much more is heav'n to me;
Why ſhould not I have patience then
To wait as well as he?
To promiſes, appointed years,
By God's decrees, are ſet;
Theſe once expir'd, beyond its fears
My ſoul ſhall quickly get.
How ſmall a part of haſty time,
Which quickly will expire,
Doth me within this world confine,
And then comes my deſire.
Come, Lord, how long my ſoul hath gaſp'd!
Faith my affections warms;
O when ſhall my poor ſoul be claſp'd
In its Redeemer's arms!
The time ſeems long, yet here I'll lie,
'Till thou, my God, do call:
It is enough, eternity
Will make amends for all.

## CHAP. XV.

### Upon the Harveſt-Seaſon.

*Corn, fully ripe, is reap'd, and gather'd in:*
*So muſt yourſelves, when ripe in grace, or ſin.*

#### OBSERVATION.

WHEN the fields are white to harveſt, then huſbandmen walk through them, rub the ears; and finding the grain full and ſolid, they preſently prepare their ſcythes and ſickles; ſend for their harveſt-men, who quickly reap and mow them down; and after theſe follow the binders, who tie it up; from the field where it grew, it is carried to the barn, where it is threſhed out; the good grain gathered into an heap, the chaff ſeparated and burnt, or thrown to the dunghill. How bare and naked do the fields look after harveſt, which before were pleaſant to behold? When the harveſt-men enter into the field, it is (to allude to that, Joel ii. 3.) before them, like the garden of Eden, and behind them a deſolate wilderneſs; and, in ſome places, it is uſual to ſet fire to the dry ſtubble when the corn is houſed; which rages furiouſly, and covers it all with aſhes.

#### APPLICATION.

THE application of this, I find made to my hands by Chriſt himſelf, in Mat. xiii. 38, 39. "The field is the world; the "good ſeed are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the "children of the wicked one; the enemy that ſowed them is the "devil; the harveſt is the end of the world; the reapers are the "angels."

The field is the world; there both the godly and ungodly live and grow together, until they be both ripe; and then they ſhall both be reaped down by death: death is the ſickle that reaps down both. I will open this allegory in the following particulars:

1. In a catching harveſt, when the huſbandman ſees the clouds begin to gather and grow black, he hurries in his corn with all poſſible haſte, and houſes it day and night.

So doth God, the great Huſbandman; he hurries the ſaints into their graves when judgments are coming upon the world; Iſa. lvii. 1. "The righteous periſh, and no man layeth it to heart; and mer-"ciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is "is taken away from the evil to come." Methuſelah died the year before the flood; Auguſtine a little before the ſacking of Hippo; Pareus juſt before the taking of Heidelburg; Luther a little before the wars broke out in Germany. But what ſpeak I of ſingle ſaints? Sometimes the Lord houſes great numbers together, before ſome ſweeping judgment comes. How many bright and glorious ſtars did ſet almoſt together within the compaſs of a few years, to the aſtoniſh-

nent of many wiſe and tender hearts in England? I find ſome of hem thus ranked in a funeral elegy:

The learned Twiſſe went firſt, (it was his right)
Then holy Palmer, Burroughs, Love, Gouge, White,
Hill, Whitaker, grave Gataker and Strong,
Perne, Marſhal, Robinſon, all gone along.
I have not nam'd them half; their only ſtrife
Hath been (of late) who ſhould firſt part with life.
Theſe few who yet ſurvive, ſick of this age,
Long to have done their parts, and leave the ſtage.

The Lord ſees it better for them to be under-ground, than above-ground; and therefore, by a merciful providence, ſets them out of harm's way.

2. Neither the corn nor tares can poſſibly reſiſt the ſharp and keen ickle, when it is applied to them by the reaper's hand; neither an the godly or ungodly reſiſt the ſtroke of death when God inflicts t; Eccl. viii. 8. "No man can keep alive his own ſoul in the day "of death; and there is no diſcharge in that war." The frail body of man is as unable to withſtand that ſtroke, as the weak reeds or eeble ſtalks of the corn are to reſiſt the keen ſcythe and ſharp ickle.

3. The reapers receive the wheat which they cut down into their rms and boſom. Hence that expreſſion, by way of imprecation upon he wicked, Pſal. cxxix. 6, 7. "Let them be as the graſs upon the houſe "top, which withers before it grows up; wherewith the mower fill-"eth not his hand, nor he that bindeth ſheaves, his boſom." Such withered graſs are the wicked, who are never taken into the reaper's boſom; but as ſoon as ſaints are cut down by death, they fall into the hands and boſoms of the angels of God, who bear them in their arms and boſoms to God their father, Luke xvi. 22. For look, as theſe bleſſed ſpirits did exceedingly rejoice at their converſion, Luke xv. 10. and thought it no diſhonour to miniſter to them, whilſt they ſtood in the field, Heb. i. 14. So when they are cut down by death, they will rejoice to be their convoy to heaven.

4. When the corn and weeds are reaped and mowed down, they ſhall never grow any more in that field; neither ſhall we ever return to live an animal life any more after death, Job vii. 9, 10. "As the "cloud is conſumed, and vaniſheth away; ſo he that goeth down to "the grave, ſhall come up no more; he ſhall return no more to his "houſe, neither ſhall his place know him any more."

Laſtly, (to come home to the particular ſubject of this chapter) the reapers are never ſent to cut down the harveſt until it be fully ripe; neither will God reap down ſaints or ſinners until they be come to a maturity of grace or wickedneſs. Saints are not reaped down until their grace is ripe, Job v. 26. "Thou ſhalt come to thy grave "in a full age, as a ſhock of corn cometh in its ſeaſon." 'Not that 'every godly man dies in ſuch a full old age, (ſaith Mr Caryl on that

'place) but yet, in one ſenſe, it is an univerſal truth, and ever ful-
'filled; for whenſoever they die, they die in a good age; yea,
'though they die in the ſpring and flower of their youth, they die
'in a good old age; i. e. they are ripe for death whenever they die.
'Whenever a godly man dies, it is harveſt-time with him, though
'in a natural capacity he be cut down while he is green, and crop-
'ped in the bud or bloſſom; yet in his ſpiritual capacity he never
'dies before he be ripe. God ripens him ſpeedily, when he intends
'to take him out of the world ſpeedily; he can let out ſuch warm
'rays and beams of his Spirit upon him, as ſhall ſoon maturate the
'ſeeds of grace into a preparedneſs for glory.'

The wicked alſo have their ripening-time for hell and judgment; God doth with much long-ſuffering endure the veſſels of wrath, prepared for deſtruction. Of their ripeneſs for judgment the Scripture often ſpeaks, Gen. xv. 16. "The ſin of the Amorites is not yet "full." And of Babylon it is ſaid, Jer. li. 13. "O thou that dwel-"leſt upon many waters! thine end is come, and the meaſure of "thy covetouſneſs."

It is worth remarking, that the meaſure of the ſin, and the end of the ſinner, come together. So Joel iii. 13. "Put ye in the ſickle, "for the harveſt of the earth is ripe; for the preſs is full, the fats "overflow; for their wickedneſs is great." Where, note, ſinners are not cut down till they be ripe and ready. Indeed, they are never ripe for death, nor ready for the grave; that is, fit to die; yet they are always ripe for wrath, and ready for hell before they die. Now, as huſbandmen judge of the ripeneſs of their harveſt, by the colour and hardneſs of the grain; ſo may we judge of the ripeneſs both of ſaints and ſinners, for heaven or hell, by theſe following ſigns.

*Three ſigns of the maturity of grace.*

1. WHEN the corn is near ripe, it bows the head, and ſtoops lower than when it was green. When the people of God are near ripe for heaven, they grow more humble and ſelf-denying, than in the days of their firſt profeſſion. The longer a ſaint grows in the world, the better he is ſtill acquainted with his own heart, and his obligations to God; both which are very humbling things. Paul had one foot in heaven, when he called himſelf the chiefeſt of ſinners, and leaſt of ſaints, 1 Tim. i. 15. Eph. iii. 8. A Chriſtian in the progreſs of his knowledge and grace, is like a veſſel caſt into the ſea, the more it fills, the deeper it ſinks. Thoſe that went to ſtudy at Athens (ſaith Plutarch) at firſt coming ſeemed to themſelves to be wiſe men; afterwards only lovers of wiſdom, and after that, only rhetoricians, ſuch as could ſpeak of wiſdom, but knew little of it, and laſt of all, ideots in their own apprehenſions; ſtill, with the increaſe of learning, laying aſide their pride and arrogancy.

2. When harveſt is nigh, the grain is more ſolid and pithy than ever it was before; green corn is ſoft and ſpungy, but ripe corn is

ubſtantial and weighty: So it is with Chriſtians; the affections of a oung Chriſtian, perhaps are more feverous and ſprightly; but thoſe f a grown Chriſtian are more judicious and ſolid; their love to Chriſt bounds more and more in all judgments, Phil. i. 9. The limbs of a hild are more active and pliable: but as he grows up to a perfect ſtate, he parts are more conſolidated and firmly knit. The fingers of an ld muſician are not ſo nimble; but he hath a more judicious ear in uſic than in his youth.

3. When corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of its own accord to the round, and there ſhed; whereby it doth, as it were, anticipate the arveſt-man, and calls upon him to put in the ſickle. Not unlike to hich are the lookings and longings, the groanings and haſtenings of eady Chriſtians to their expected glory; they haſten to the coming of he Lord, or, as Montanus more fitly renders it, they haſten the oming of the Lord; (i. e.) they are urgent and inſtant in their deires and cries to haſten his coming; their deſires ſally forth to meet he Lord; they willingly take death by the hand; as the corn bends o the earth, ſo doth theſe ſouls to heaven: This ſhows their harveſt o be near.

### *Six ſigns of the maturity of ſin.*

WHEN ſinners are even dead-ripe for hell, the ſigns appear upon them; or by theſe, at leaſt, you may conclude thoſe ſouls not to be far from wrath, upon whom they appear.

1. When conſcience is waſted, and grown paſt feeling, having no remorſe for ſin; when it ceaſes to check, reprove, and ſmite for ſin any more, the day of that ſinner is at hand, his harveſt is even come. The greateſt violation of conſcience is the greateſt of ſins; this was the caſe of the forlorn Gentiles, among whom Satan had ſuch a plentiful harveſt; the patience of God ſuffered them to grow till their conſciences were grown ſeared, and paſt feelings, Eph. iv. 19. When a member is ſo mortified, that if you lance and cut it never ſo much, no freſh blood, or quick fleſh appears, nor doth the man feel any pain in all this, then it is time to cut it off.

2. When men give themſelves over to the ſatisfaction of their luſts, to commit ſin with greedineſs, then are they grown to a maturity of ſin; when men have ſlipped the reins of conſcience, and ruſh headlong into all impiety, then the laſt ſands of God's patience are running down. Thus Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner gave themſelves over to wickedneſs and ſtrange ſins; and then juſtice quickly gave them up for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

3. That man is even ripe for hell, that is become a contriver of ſin, a deſigner, a ſtudent in wickedneſs. One would think it ſtrange, that any man ſhould ſet his invention on work upon ſuch a ſubject as ſin is, that any ſhould ſtudy to become a dexterous artiſt this way! and yet the ſcripture frequently ſpeaks of ſuch, "whoſe bellies pre-

" pare deceit," Job xv. 35. " who travail in pain to bring forth" this deformed birth, ver. 20. " who wink with their eyes," whilſt plodding wickedneſs, as men uſed to do when they are moſt intent upon the ſtudy of any knotty problem, Prov. vi. 13. Theſe have ſo much of hell already in them, that they are more than half in hell already.

4. He that of a forward profeſſor is turned a bitter perſecutor, is alſo within a few rounds of the top of the ladder; the contempt of their light the Lord hath already puniſhed upon them, in their obduracy and madneſs againſt the light. Reader, if thou be gone thus far, thou art almoſt gone beyond all hope of recovery. Towards other ſinners God uſually exerciſes more patience, but with ſuch he makes ſhort work. When Judas turns traitor to his Lord, he is quickly ſent to his own place. Such as are again intangled and overcome of thoſe luſts they once ſeemed to have clean eſcaped, theſe bring upon themſelves ſwift damnation, and their judgment lingers not, 2 Pet. ii. 3, 20.

5. He that can endure no reproof or controul in the way of his ſin, but derides all counſel, and, like a ſtrong current, rages at, and ſweeps away all obſtacles in his way, will quickly fall into the dead lake, Prov. xxix. 1. " He that being often reproved, hardeneth his " neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy." This is a death-ſpot, a hell-ſpot, wherever it appears. From this very ſymptom the prophet plainly predicted the approaching ruin of Amazia, 2 Chron. xxv. 16. " I know that God hath determined to " deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not hearkened " to my voice." He that will not be timely counſelled, ſhall be quickly deſtroyed.

*Laſtly*, When a man comes to glory in his ſin, and boaſt of his wickedneſs, then it is time to cut him down, " whoſe end is de- " ſtruction, whoſe glory is in their ſhame;" Phil. iii. 19. This is a braving, a daring of God to his face; and with whomſoever he bears long, to be ſure theſe are none of them,

You ſee now what are the ſigns of a full ripe ſinner; and when it comes to this, either with a nation, or with a ſingle perſon, then ruin is near, Joel iii. 13. Gen. xv. 16. It is in the filling up of the meaſure of ſin, as in the filling up of a veſſel caſt into the ſea which rolls from ſide to ſide, taking in the water by little and little till it be full, and then down it ſinks to the bottom. Mean while, admirable is Divine patience, which bears with theſe veſſels of wrath, whilſt fitting for deſtruction!

REFLECTION.

*The reflection of a growing Chriſtian.*

1. Cheer thyſelf, O my ſoul! with the heart-ſtrengthening bread of this Divine meditation. Let faith turn every drop of this truth into a ſoul-reviving cordial. God hath ſown the precious ſeed of grace up-

on my ſoul; and though my heart hath been an unkindly ſoil, which hath kept it back, and much hindered its growth, yet, bleſſed be the Lord, it ſtill grows on, though by ſlow degrees; and from the ſpringing of the ſeed, and ſhooting forth of thoſe gracious habits, I may conclude an approaching harveſt: Now is my ſalvation nearer than when I believed; every day I come nearer to my ſalvation, Rom. xiii. 11. O that every day I were more active for the God of my ſalvation! Grow on, my ſoul, and add to thy faith virtue, to thy virtue knowledge, &c. Grow on from faith to faith; keep thyſelf under the ripening influences of heavenly ordinances: The faſter thou groweſt in grace, the ſooner thou ſhalt be reaped down in mercy, and bound up in the bundle of life, 1 Sam. xv. 29. I have not yet attained the meaſure and proportion of grace aſſigned to me, neither am I already perfect, but am reaching forth to the things before me, and preſſing towards the mark for the prize of my heavenly calling, Phil. iii. 12, 13. O mercy to be admired! that I who lately had one foot in hell, ſtand now with one foot in heaven!

*The reflection of the decaying Chriſtian.*

2. But the caſe is far different with me; whilſt others are ripening apace for heaven, I am withering; many a ſoul plowed up by conviction, and ſown by ſanctification long after me, hath quite overtopped and outgrown me; my ſweet and early bloſſoms are nipped and blown off my bright morning overcaſt and clouded: had I kept on, according to the rate of my firſt growth, I had either now been in heaven, or at leaſt in the ſuburbs of it on earth; but my graces wither and languiſh, my heart contracts and cools to heavenly things; the ſun and rain of ordinances and providences improve not my graces: how ſad therefore is the ſtate of my ſoul!

*The reflection of a hardening ſinner.*

3. Thy caſe, O declining ſaint, is ſad, but not like mine: thine is but a temporary remiſſion of the acts of grace, which is recoverable; but I am judicially hardening, and "treaſuring up to myſelf wrath a-"gainſt the day of wrath," Rom. ii. 5. Time was when I had ſome tender ſenſe of ſin, when I could mourn and grieve for it; now I have none at all: my heart is grown ſtupid and ſottiſh. Time was when I had ſome conſcientious care of duty, when my heart would ſmite me for the neglect of it; but now none at all. Wretched ſoul! what wilt thou do? Thou art gone far, indeed, a few ſteps further will put thee beyond hope: hitherto I ſtand in the field; the long-ſuffering God doth yet ſpare me; yea, ſpare me, while he hath cut down many of my companions in ſin round about me. What doth this admirable patience, this long-ſuffering, drawn out to a wonder, ſpeak concerning me! doth it not tell me, that the Lord is not willing I ſhould periſh, but rather come to repentance? 2 Pet. iii. 9. And what argument is like his pity and patience, to lead a ſoul to repentance? Rom. ii. 4. O that I may not fruſtrate

at laſt the end of a long-ſuffering God, leſt he proportion the degree of his wrath, according to the length of his patience!

## THE POEM.

WHEN fields are white, to harveſt forth you go
With ſcythes and ſickles to reap down and mow.
Down go the laden ears flat to the ground,
Which thoſe that follow having ſtitch'd and bound,
'Tis carried home unto the barn, and ſo
The fields are rid where lately corn did grow.
This world's the field, and they that dwell therein
The corn and tares, which long have ripen'd been:
Angels the reapers, and the judgment-day
The time of harveſt, when, like corn and hay,
The fading flow'rs of earthly glory muſt
Be mowed down, and level'd with the duſt:
The barns are heav'n and hell, the time draws nigh,
When through the dark'ned clouds and troubl'd ſky,
The Lord ſhall break; a dreadful trumpet ſhall
Sound to the dead; the ſtars from heaven fall;
The rolling ſpheres with horrid flames ſhall burn:
And then the tribes on earth ſhall wail and mourn.
The judgment ſet, before Chriſt's awful throne
All fleſh ſhall be conven'd, and ev'ry one
Receive his doom; which done, the juſt ſhall be
Bound in life's bundle, even as you ſee
The full ripe ears of wheat bound up and borne
In ſheaves with joy into the owner's barn.
This done, the angels next in bundles bind
The tares together; as they had combin'd
In acting ſin, ſo now their lot muſt be
To burn together in one miſery.
Drunkards with drunkards pinion'd, ſhall be ſent
To hell together in one regiment.
Adulterers and ſwearers there ſhall lie
In flames among their old ſociety.
O dreadful howlings! O the hideous moans
Of fetter'd ſinners! O the tears! the groans!
The doleful lamentations as they go
Chain'd faſt together to their place of woe!
The world thus clear'd, as fields when harveſt's in,
Shall be no more a ſtage for acting ſin.
With purifying flames it ſhall be burn'd,
Its ſtately fabrics into aſhes turn'd.
Ceaſe then, my ſoul to doat on, or admire
This ſplendid world, which is reſerv'd for fire.
Decline the company of ſinners here,
As thou would'ſt not be ſhackled with them there.

## CHAP. XVII.

### Upon the Care of Huſbandmen to provide for Winter.

*Your winter ſtore in ſummer you provide:*
*To Chriſtian prudence this muſt be apply'd.*

#### OBSERVATION.

GOOD huſbands are careful in ſummer to provide for winter. Then they gather in their winter ſtore; food and fuel for themſelves, and fodder for their cattle. "He that gathers in ſum-"mer is a wiſe ſon: but he that ſleeps in harveſt is a ſon that "cauſeth ſhame," Prov. x. 5. A well choſen ſeaſon is the greateſt advantage to any action; which, as it is ſeldom found in haſte, ſo it is often loſt by delay. It is a good proverb which the frugal Dutch have among them:—*Bonus ſervatius faciet bonum bonifacium:*—A good ſaver will make a good benefactor. And it is a good proverb of our own, He that neglects the occaſion, the occaſion will neglect him. Huſbandmen know that ſummer will not hold all the year; neither will they truſt to the hopes of a mild and favourable winter, but in ſeaſon provide for the worſt.

#### APPLICATION.

WHAT excellent Chriſtians ſhould we be, were we but as provident and thoughtful for our ſouls? It is doubtleſs a ſingular point of Chriſtian wiſdom to foreſee a day of ſpiritual ſtraits and neceſſities; and, during the day of grace, to make proviſion for it. This great goſpel-truth is excellently ſhadowed forth in this natural obſervation, which I ſhall branch out into theſe ſeven particulars.

1. Huſbandmen know there is a change and viciſſitude of ſeaſons and weather; though it be pleaſant ſummer weather now, yet winter will tread upon the heel of ſummer: froſts, ſnows, and great falls of rain muſt be expected. This alternate courſe of ſeaſons, in nature, is ſettled by a firm law of the God of nature to the end of the world, Gen. viii. 22. "Whilſt the earth remaineth, ſeed-time and harveſt, "cold and heat, winter and ſummer, day and night, ſhall not "ceaſe."

And Chriſtians know, that there are changes in the right-hand of the Moſt High, in reference to their ſpiritual ſeaſons. If there be a *ſpring-time* of the goſpel, there will be alſo an *autumn*; if a day of *proſperity*, it will ſet in a night of *adverſity*: "for God hath ſet "the one over againſt the other," Eccleſ. vii. 14. In heaven there is a day of everlaſting ſerenity; in hell a night of perfect endleſs horror and darkneſs; on earth, light and darkneſs take their turns, proſperity and adverſity, even to ſouls as well as bodies, ſucceed each other. If there be a goſpel-day, a day of grace now current, it will

have its period and determination, Gen. iii. 6.

2. Common prudence and experience enable the huſbandman, in the midſt of ſummer, to foreſee a winter, and provide for it before he feel it; yea, natural inſtinct teaches this to the very birds of the air, and beaſts of the field.

And ſpiritual wiſdom ſhould teach Chriſtians to exerciſe their foreſeeing faculties, and not ſuffer them to feel evil before they fear it. But, oh! the ſtupifying nature of ſin! Though the ſtork in the heavens knows her appointed time, and the turtle, crane, and ſwallow the time of their coming, yet man, whom God hath made wiſer than the fowls of the air, in this acts quite below them, Jer. viii. 7.

3. The end of God's ordaining a ſummer ſeaſon, and ſending warm and pleaſant weather, is to ripen the fruits of the earth, and give the huſbandman fit opportunity to gather them in.

And God's deſign of giving men a day of grace, is to furniſh them with an opportunity for the everlaſting happineſs and ſalvation of their ſouls; Rev. ii. 21. "I gave her ſpace to repent." It is not a mere reprival of the ſoul, or only a delay of the execution of threatened wrath, though there be much mercy in that; but the peculiar aim of this patience and bounty of God is to open for them a way to eſcape the wrath to come, by "leading them to repentance," Rom. ii. 4.

4. The huſbandman doth not find all harveſt-ſeaſons alike favourable; ſometimes they have much fair weather, and meet with no hindrance in their buſineſs; other times it is a catching harveſt, but now and then a fair day, and then they muſt be nimble, or all is loſt.

There is alſo a great difference in ſoul-ſeaſons; ſome have had a long and fair ſeaſon of grace; a hundred and twenty years did God wait upon the old world, in the miniſtry of Noah. Long did God wait on the gainſaying Iſraelites, Iſa. xlii. 14. "I have a long time "held my peace; I have been ſtill, and refrained myſelf." Others have a ſhort and catching ſeaſon, all lies upon a day, upon a nick of time, Acts xvii. 30.

5. A proper ſeaſon neglected and loſt is irrecoverable. Many things in huſbandry muſt be done in their ſeaſon, or cannot be done at all for that year: if he plow not, and ſow not in the proper ſeaſon, he loſes the harveſt of that year.

It is even ſo as to ſpiritual-ſeaſons: Chriſt neglected, and grace deſpiſed, in the ſeaſon when God offers them, are irrecoverably loſt, Prov. i. 28. "Then (that is when the ſeaſon is over) "they ſhall "call upon me, but I will not hear." Oh! there is a great deal of time in a ſhort opportunity; that may be done, or prevented, in an hour rightly timed, which cannot be done, or prevented, in a man's life-time afterwards. There was one reſolved to kill Julius Cæſar ſuch a day: the night before a friend ſent him a letter to acquaint him with it: but he being at ſupper, and buſy in diſcourſe, ſaid, to-morrow is a new day; and indeed it was *dies noviſſima*, his laſt day to him.

Whence it became a proverb in Greece, *To-morrow is a new day.* Our glaſs runs in heaven, and we cannot ſee how much or little of the ſand of God's patience is yet to run down; but this is certain, when that glaſs is run, there is nothing to be done for our ſouls, Luke xix. 42. "O that thou hadſt known, at leaſt, in this thy day, "the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from "thine eyes."

6. Thoſe huſbandmen that are careful and laborious in the ſummer, have the comfort and benefit of it in winter: he that then provides fuel, ſhall ſit warm in his habitation, when others blow their fingers. He that provides food for his family, and fodder for his cattle, in the harveſt, ſhall eat the fruit of it, and enjoy the comfort of his labours, when others ſhall be expoſed to ſhifts and ſtraits. And he that provides for eternity, and lays up for his ſoul a good foundation againſt the time to come, ſhall eat when others are hungry, and ſing when others howl, Iſa. lxv. 13. A day of death will come, and that will be a day of ſtraits to all negligent ſouls; but then the diligent Chriſtian ſhall enjoy the peace and comfort that ſhall flow in upon his heart, from his holy care and ſincere diligence in duties; as 2 Cor. i. 12. "This is our rejoicing, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in "ſincerity and godly ſimplicity, we have had our converſation in this "world." So Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 3. "Remember now, O "Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect "heart." A day of judgment will come, and then fooliſh virgins, who neglected the ſeaſon of getting oil in their lamps, will be put to their ſhifts; then they come to the wiſe, and ſay, Give us of your oil, Matth. xxv. 8, 9. but they have none to ſpare, and the ſeaſon of buying is then over.

7. No wiſe huſbandman will neglect a fit opportunity of gathering in his hay and corn, upon a preſumption of much fair weather to come: he will not ſay, The weather is ſettled, and I need not trouble myſelf; though my corn and hay be fit for the houſe, yet I may get it in another time as well as now.

And no wiſe Chriſtian will loſe a preſent ſeaſon for his ſoul, upon the hopes of much more time, yet to come; but will rather ſay, Now is my time, and I know not what will be hereafter: hereafter I may wiſh to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and not ſee it, Luke xvii. 22. It is ſad to hear how cunning ſome men are to diſpute themſelves out of heaven, as if the devil had hired them to plead againſt their own ſouls; ſometimes urging the example of thoſe that were called at the eleventh hour, Mat. xx. 6. and ſometimes that of the penitent thief: but, oh! to how little purpoſe is the former pleaded? they that were called at the eleventh hour were never called before, as theſe have been; no man had hired, that is, called or invited them to Chriſt; and for the thief (as Mr Fenner rightly obſerves) it was a ſingular and extraordinary example. It was done when Chriſt hanged on the croſs, and was to be inaugurated; then

kings manifeſt ſuch bounty, and pardon ſuch crimes as are never pardoned afterwards. Beſides, God was then in a way of working miracles; then he rent the rocks, opened the graves, raiſed the dead, and converted this thief; but God is now out of that way.

REFLECTIONS.

*The careleſs ſoul's reflection.*

1. I have indeed been a good huſband for the world: with what care and providence have I looked out for myſelf and family, to provide food to nouriſh them, and clothes to defend them againſt the aſperities of winter? mean while, neglecting to make proviſion for eternity, or take care for my ſoul. O my deſtitute ſoul! how much have I ſlighted and undervalued thee? I have taken more care for an horſe, or an ox, than for thee: a well-ſtored barn, but an empty ſoul. Will it not ſhortly be with me, as with that careleſs mother, who, when her houſe was on fire, buſily beſtirred herſelf to ſave the goods, but forgot the child (though it were ſaved by another hand)? and then minding her child, ran up and down like one diſtracted, wringing her hands, and crying, O my child! my child! I have ſaved my goods, and loſt my child! Such will be the caſe of thee my ſoul, Matth. xvi. 26. Beſides, how eaſy will my conviction be at the bar of Chriſt? Will not my providence and care for the things of this life, leave me ſpeechleſs and ſelf-condemned in that day? What ſhall I anſwer, when the Lord ſhall ſay, Thou couldeſt foreſee a winter, and ſeaſonably provide for it; yea, thou hadſt ſo much care of thy very beaſts, to provide for their neceſſities: and why tookeſt thou no care for thy ſoul? Was that only not worth the caring for?

*The preſumptuous ſoul's reflection.*

2. Is it ſo dangerous to neglect a preſent proper ſeaſon of grace? What then have I done, who have ſuffered many ſuch ſeaſons to die away in my hand, upon a groundleſs hope of future opportunities? Ah deluded wretch! what if that ſuppoſition fail? Where am I then? I am not the lord of time, neither am I ſure, that he who is, will ever vouchſafe an hour of grace in old age, to him that hath neglected many ſuch hours in youth; neither indeed is it ordinary for God ſo to do. It is ſtoried of Caius Marius Victorius, who lived about three hundred years after Chriſt, and to his old age continued a Pagan; but at laſt being convinced of the Chriſtian verity, he came to Simplicianus, and told him he would be a Chriſtian; but neither he nor the church could believe it, it being ſo rare an example for any to be converted at his age: but at laſt, ſeeing it was real, there was a ſhouting and gladneſs, and ſinging of pſalms in all churches; the people crying, Caius Marius Victorius is become a Chriſtian! This was written for a wonder: and what ground have I to think, that God will work ſuch wonders for me, who have neglected his ordinary means of ſalvation?

3. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul! who gave thee a ſeaſon, a day for eternal life, which is more than he hath afforded for thouſands; yea, bleſs the Lord for giving thee an heart to underſtand and improve that ſeaſon. I confeſs I have not improved it as I ought; yet this I can (through mercy) ſay, that however it fare in future times with my outward man, though I have no treaſures or ſtores laid up on earth, or if I have, they are but corruptible, yet I have a bleſſed hope laid up in heaven, Col. i. 5. I have bags that wax not old. Whilſt worldlings rejoice in their ſtores and heaps, I rejoice in theſe eternal treaſures.

*The induſtrious ſoul's reflection.*

## THE POEM.

OBſerve in ſummer's ſultry heat,
How in the hotteſt day
The huſbandman doth toil and ſweat
About his corn and hay:
If then he ſhould not reap and mow,
And gather in his ſtores,
How ſhould he live, when, for the ſnow,
He can't move out of doors?
The little ants, and painful bees,
By nature's inſtinct led,
Theſe have their ſummer granaries
For winter furniſhed.
But thou, my ſoul, whoſe ſummer's day
Is almoſt paſt and gone;
What ſoul-proviſion doſt thou lay
In ſtock to ſpend upon?
If nature teaches to prepare
For temporal life, much rather
Grace ſhould provoke to greater care,
Soul-food in time to gather.
Days of affliction and diſtreſs
Are haſting on apace;
If now I live in careleſneſs,
How ſad will be my caſe!
Unworthy of the name of man,
Who for that ſoul of thine,
Wilt not do that which others can
Do for their very kine.
Think, frugal farmers, when you ſee
Your mows of corn and hay,
What a conviction this will be
To you another day:
Who ne'er were up before the ſun,
Nor brake an hour's reſt

For your poor ſouls, as you have done
So often for a beaſt.
Learn once to ſee the difference
Betwixt eternal things,
And thoſe poor tranſient things of ſenſe,
That fly with eagle's wings.

## CHAP. XVII.

### Upon reaping the ſame we ſow.

*When from tare-ſeeds you ſee choice wheat to grow,*
*Then from your luſts may joy and comfort flow.*

#### OBSERVATION.

GOD gives to every ſeed its own body, 1 Cor. xv. 38. At firſt he created every tree and herb of the field, having its ſeed in itſelf, for the conſervation of their *ſpecies*, and they all inviolably obſerve the law of their creation. All fruits naturally riſe out of the ſeeds and roots proper to them. "Men do not gather grapes of "thorns, nor figs of thiſtles:" ſuch productions would be monſtrous in nature; and although the juice or ſap of the earth be the common matter of all kind of fruits, yet it is ſpecificated according to the different ſorts of plants and ſeeds it nouriſhes. Where wheat is ſown it is turned into wheat; in an apple-tree, it becomes an apple; and ſo in every ſort of plants or ſeeds, it is concocted into fruit proper to the kind.

#### APPLICATION.

TRANSLATE this into ſpirituals, and the propoſition ſhadowed forth by it, is fully expreſſed by the apoſtle, Gal. vi. 7. "What a man ſows, that ſhall he reap: They that ſow to the fleſh "ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; and they that ſow to the ſpirit "ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting." And as ſure as the harveſt follows the ſeed-time, ſo ſure ſhall ſuch fruits and effects reſult from the ſeeds of ſuch actions. "He that ſoweth iniquity ſhall reap vani"ty," Prov. xxii. 8. "And they that now go forth weeping, and bear"ing precious ſeed, ſhall doubtleſs come again rejoicing, bringing their "ſheaves with them," Pſal. cxxvi. 6. The ſum of all this is, that our preſent actions have the ſame reſpect and relation to future rewards and puniſhments, as the ſeed we ſow in our fields hath to the harveſt we reap from it. Every gracious action is the ſeed of joy, and every ſinful action the ſeed of anguiſh and ſorrow to the ſoul that ſoweth it. Two things are ſenſibly preſented to us in this ſimilitude:

1. That as the ſeed ſown is preſently covered from our ſight under

the clods, and for ſome time after we ſee no more of it, and yet at laſt it appears again; by which it is evident to us that it is not finally loſt: So our preſent actions, though phyſically tranſient, and perhaps forgotten, yet are not loſt, but after a time ſhall appear again, in order to a retribution.

If this were not ſo, all good and holy actions would be to the loſs of him that performed them. All the ſelf-denial, ſpending duties, and ſharp ſufferings of the people of God, would turn to their damage, though not in point of honeſty, yet in point of perſonal utility; and then alſo, what difference would there be betwixt the actions of a man and a beaſt, with reſpect to future good or evil? Yea, man would then be more feared and obeyed than God, and all ſouls be ſwayed in their motions, only by the influence of preſent things: And where then would religion be found in the world? It is an excellent note of Drexellius; 'Our works (ſaith he) do not paſs away as ſoon 'as they are done, but as ſeed ſown, ſhall, after a time, riſe up to all 'eternity: Whatever we think, ſpeak, or do, once ſpoken, thought, 'or done, is eternal, and abides for ever.'

What Zeuxes, the famous limner, ſaid of his work, may be truly ſaid of all our works; *Æternitati pingo*,—I paint for eternity. O, how careful ſhould men be of what they ſpeak and do whilſt they are commanded ſo to ſpeak and ſo to do, as thoſe that ſhall be judged by the perfect law of liberty! James ii. 12. What more tranſient than a vain word? And yet for ſuch words men ſhall give an account in the day of judgment, Matth. xii. 36. That is the firſt thing: Actions, like ſeed, ſhall riſe and appear again in order to a retribution.

2. The other thing held forth in this ſimilitude is, that according to the nature of our actions now, will be the fruit and reward of them then. Though the fruit or conſequence of holy actions, for the preſent may ſeem bitter, and the fruit of ſinful actions, ſweet and pleaſant; yet there is nothing more certain than that their future fruits ſhall be according to their preſent nature and quality, 2 Cor. v. 10. Then Dionyſius ſhall retract that ſaying, *Ecce quam proſpera navigatio a Deo datur ſacrilegis*, Behold how God favours our ſacrileges! Sometimes indeed (though but rarely) God cauſes ſinners to reap in this world the ſame that they have ſown; as hath been their ſin, ſuch hath been their puniſhment. It was openly confeſſed by Adonibezek, Judg. i. 7. "As I have done, ſo hath God re-"quited me."

Socrates, in his church hiſtory, furniſhes us with a pertinent paſſage to this purpoſe, concerning Valens the Emperor, who was an Arian, and a bitter perſecutor of the Chriſtians: This man, when eighty of the orthodox Chriſtians ſailed from Conſtantinople to Nicomeda, to treat with him about the points of Arianiſm, and to ſettle



* *Drexellius de æternitate prope finem.*

the matter by way of diſpute; the emperor hearing of their arrival, while they were yet in the harbour, and not a man landed, cauſed the ſhips to be fired wherein they were, and ſo conſumed them all. Not long after, in his wars againſt the Goths, he was overthrown; and hiding himſelf in a little cottage, the enemy coming by, burnt it and him together. Thus this wretch reaped what he ſowed, burning for burning, the very ſame in kind paid him again. It is not always ſo in this world; but ſo it ſhall be in that to come: The tables ſhall then be turned, and the *ſcene* altered; for ſhall not the Judge of all the world do righteouſly? * Diogenes was tempted to think, that God had caſt off the government of the world when he ſaw the wicked proſper in their wickedneſs. On the ſame ground many have been tempted to Atheiſm; but then the world ſhall ſee diſtributive juſtice ſhining out in its glory, "Tribulation, anguiſh, and wrath to every "ſoul of man that doth evil; but glory, honour, and peace to every "man that worketh good," Rom. ii. 9, 10. Then it will appear what ſeed we ſowed, what lives we lived; "For God ſhall bring "every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or evil," Eccleſ. xii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

*The profane perſon's reflection.*

1. This meditation may be to me what the hand-writing upon the wall was to that profane prince, Dan. v. 5, 6. and a like effect it ſhould have upon me; for if all the actions of this life be ſeed ſown for the next, Lord, what a crop, what a dreadful harveſt am I like to have! How many oaths and curſes, lies and vain words have I ſown with my tongue! How have I wronged, oppreſſed, and over-reached in my dealings! Ruſhed into all profaneneſs, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, ſabbath-breaking, &c. "as the horſe ruſheth into the battle!" And what ſhall I reap from ſuch ſeed as this but vengeance and fury! Theſe ſins ſeemed pleaſant in the commiſſion, but, oh! how bitter will it be on their account? "What ſhall I do when God riſeth up; "and when he viſiteth, what ſhall I anſwer him?" Job xxxi. 14. Is it not reaſonable and juſt, O my ſoul! that thou ſhouldeſt eat the fruit of thine own planting, and reap what thou haſt ſown? I thought nothing but profit and pleaſure would ſpring from my luſt; but now I ſee it is a root bearing gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Wretched ſoul! what ſhall I do? By theſe actions I am undone. I have been the author of mine own ruin, twiſted an halter with mine own fingers for the execution of mine own ſoul: Oh! let me rather taſte the bitterneſs of ſin, by repentance now, than enjoy its preſent pleaſures which betray the ſoul to endleſs wrath!

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* *Cum video mala fata bonis, ignoſcite quæſo:*
*Sollicitor nullos eſſe putare Deos.* Ovid.

2. How have I alſo been deceived in this matter? I verily thought that glory and immortality would have been the fruit and product of my moral honeſty and righteouſneſs; that joy and peace had been ſeminally contained in thoſe actions; but now I ſee ſuch fruit can ſpring from no other root but ſpecial grace. Glory is diſcloſed from no other bud but holineſs. Alas! all my planting and ſowing was to little purpoſe, becauſe I ſowed not the right kind of ſeed; the beſt fruit I can expect from this is but a leſſer degree of damnation. *The moral man's reflection.*

Deluded ſoul! thy ſeed is no better than what the moral heathens ſowed: And do I expect better fruit than what they reaped? Civility without Chriſt, is but a freer ſlavery; and Satan holds me as faſt in captivity by this, as he doth the profane by the pleaſure of their luſts: Either I muſt ſow better ſeed, or look to reap bitter fruit.

3. Mean while, bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul! who enabled thee to ſow better ſeed; who kept thee watching, humbling thyſelf, and praying, whilſt others have been ſwearing, drinking and blaſpheming. This will yield thee fruit of joy in the world to come; yea, it yields preſent peace to thy conſcience. Theſe revenues are better than gold, ſweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb; not that ſuch fruits are meritoriouſly contained in theſe actions; I ſow to myſelf in righteouſneſs, but I reap in mercy, Hoſ. x. 12. This is the way in which God will ſave and glorify me. O then, let me be ever abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that my labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. *The holy ſoul's reflection.*

## THE POEM.

'TWOULD be a ſtrange and monſtrous thing to ſee
Cherries or plumbs grow on an apple-tree.
Whoever gather'd from the thiſtle figs?
Or fruitleſs grapes from off the worthleſs twigs
Of pricking thorns? In nature ſtill we find
All its productions anſwering to their kind.
As are the plants we ſet, or ſeeds we ſow,
Such is the fruit we ſhake, and corn we mow:
And canſt thou think, that from corruption's root
Thy ſoul ſhall pluck the ſweet and pleaſant fruit
Of ſpiritual peace! Whoever that was wiſe,
Abus'd himſelf with ſuch abſurdities?
Look what you ſow, the very ſame you'll reap,
The fruit of what you plant, be ſure you'll eat.
How are they baffled by a ſubtile devil,
Who hope for heaven, whilſt their ways are evil?
Such reaſonings here their credulous ſouls beguile,
At which, in other things, themſelves would ſmile.

Our preſent acts, though ſlightly paſſed by,
Are ſo much ſeed ſown for eternity.
The ſeeds of prayers, ſecret groans and tears,
Will ſhoot at laſt into the full-blown ears
Of peace and joy. Bleſſed are they that ſow
Beſides theſe *waters*, yea, thrice bleſs'd, that go
Bearing ſuch precious ſeed: Though now they mourn,
With joyful ſheaves they ſhortly ſhall return.
Needs muſt the full-ripe fruits in heaven be good,
When as the ſeed was glory in the bud.
But, oh! the bitter, baneful fruits of ſin,
When all the pleaſures ſinners have therein,
Like faded bloſſoms to the ground ſhall fall,
Then they will taſte the wormwood and the gall!
What God and conſcience now of ſin report,
You ſlight, and with their dreadful threat'nings ſport:
But he'll convince you then your ways are naught,
As Gideon the men of Succoth taught.
If ſermons cannot, fire and brimſtone muſt
Teach men how good it is to pamper luſt.
When conſcience takes thee by the throat, and cries
Now wretch! now ſinner! thou that didſt deſpiſe
My warnings; learn, and ever learning be
That leſſon which thou ne'er wouldſt learn of me.
The ſtouteſt ſinner then would howl and roar,
O ſin I never ſaw thy face before.
Is this the fruit of ſin? Is this the place
Where I muſt lie? Is this indeed the caſe
Of my poor ſoul! muſt I be bound in chains
With theſe companions? Oh! are theſe the gains
I get by ſin? Poor wretch! I that would never
See this before, am now undone for ever!

## CHAP. XVIII.

### Upon the Joy of Harveſt-men.

*Great is the joy of harveſt-men: yet leſs*
*Than theirs whom God doth with his favour bleſs.*

#### OBSERVATION.

AMONG all earthly joys, theſe four ſorts are noted in ſcripture, as the moſt excellent and remarkable. (1.) *Nuptial joys*: the day of eſpouſals is the day of the gladneſs of a man's heart, Cant. iii. 11. (2.) *The joy of children*: Though now it ſeems but a common *mercy* to moſt, and a burden to ſome, yet the people of God were wont to eſteem it a choice mercy, and rejoiced greatly in it, John xvi. 21. there is joy that a man is born into the world.

3) *The joy of conqueſts and victories*, when men divide the ſpoil: And, laſtly, *The joy of harveſt*. Theſe two we find put together, as principal matters of joy, Iſa. ix. 3. "They joy before thee, according to the joy in harveſt, and as men rejoice when they divide the ſpoil." The joy of harveſt is no ſmall joy; *Gaudium meſſis eſt meſſis gaudii*; The joy of the harveſt, is the harveſt of their joy. It is uſual with men, when they have reaped down their harveſt (or cut the neck, as they call it) to demonſtrate their joy by ſhouting, and loud acclamations.

APPLICATION.

THUS, and unſpeakably more than thus, do ſaints rejoice and ſhout for joy, when they reap the favour and love of God, for which they laboured in many a weary duty. This joy of harveſt, as great as it is, and as much as carnal hearts are lifted up with it, is but a trifle, a thing of nought, compared with yours; after they have ſown to themſelves in righteouſneſs, and waited for the effects and returns of their duties with patience, and at laſt come to reap in mercy, either the full harveſt in heaven, or but the firſt-fruits of it on earth, yet rejoice, "with joy unſpeakable and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. "This puts more gladneſs "into their hearts, than when corn and wine increaſe," Pſal. iv. 7. Carnal joys are but as ſoul-fevers, the agues of the inward man; there is a great difference betwixt the unnatural inflammations of a feveriſh body, which waſte the ſpirits, and drink up the radical moiſture, and the kindly well-tempered heat of an healthy body; and as much between the ſweet, ſerene, and heavenly joy, which flow from the boſom of Chriſt in the hearts of believers, and thoſe earthly delights which carnal hearts, in a ſenſual way, ſuck out of creature-enjoyments. I will ſhew you the tranſcendency of ſpiritual joys, above the joy of harveſt, in theſe eight particulars following.

1. You that joy with the joy of the harveſt, are glad, becauſe now you have food for yourſelves and families to live upon all the year; but the Chriſtian rejoiceth, becauſe he hath bread to eat that the world knows not of, Rev. ii. 17. Chriſt is the food of his ſoul, and his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, John v. 55. i. e. the moſt real and excellent food. You read, Pſal. lxxviii. 25. that men did eat angels food, i. e. Manna; which was ſuch excellent bread, that if angels did live upon material food, this would be choſen for them; and yet this is but a type and dark ſhadow of Jeſus Chriſt, the food of believers.

2. You rejoice when your harveſt is in, becauſe corn is virtually many other things beſides food; you can turn it into clothes to keep you warm, and many other neceſſaries may be purchaſed by it: but yet it is not like Chriſt, the object of a ſaint's joy; though it anſwers many things, it doth not anſwer all things, as Chriſt doth; turn it into what you will, it hath but a limited and reſpective uſefulneſs; but Jeſus Chriſt is all in all to believers, and out of him their faith

can fetch all supplies; he is their health in sickness, their strength in weakness, their ease in pain, their honour in reproach, their wealth in poverty, their friend in friendlessness, their habitation when harbourless, their enlargement in bonds, the strength of their heart, and life of their life; O! he is a full Christ! and whatever excellencies are scattered among all the creatures, do meet all in him, and much more.

3. You rejoice when you have gotten in your harvest, because now you can free those engagements, and pay those debts which you have contracted. 'Tis a comfort to be out of debt; and you may lawfully rejoice that God gives you wherewith to quit your engagements, that you may owe no man any thing but love; but still the joy of harvest falls short of the joy of the saints; for you rejoice that you are, or have wherewith to help yourselves out of men's debt: but they rejoice that they are out of God's debt; that his book is cancelled, and their sins pardoned: that by reason of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the law can demand nothing from them, Rom. viii. 1. O what matter of joy is this!

4. You rejoice, because now your corn is out of danger; all the while it was abroad, it was in hazard, but now it is housed you fear not the rain: but Christians rejoice, not because their corn is safe, but because their souls are so. All the while they abode in an unregenerate state, they were every moment in danger of the storms of wrath: but now, being in Christ, that danger is over; and what compare is there betwixt the safety of a little corn, and the security of an immortal soul?

5. Your joy is but a gift of common providence. Turks and Heathens can rejoice with your joy; but the joy of a Christian, is a peculiar favour and gift of God. Corn is given to all nations, even the most barbarous and wicked have store of it; but Christ is the portion but of a few, and those the dearly beloved of God. Luther said of the whole Turkish empire, (where is the best and greatest store of corn) that it is but a crumb which the master of the family throws to the dogs. He that had more corn than his barns could hold, now wants a drop of water to cool his tongue. Christ is a gift bestowed only upon God's elect.

6. Your joy will have an end; the time is coming, that when you have reaped down your harvests, yourselves must be reaped down by death, and then you shall rejoice in these things no more. But when your joy is ended, then is the joy of saints perfected; they reap their harvest, when you leave your harvest; their consolation is everlasting.

7. God can separate your joy from these enjoyments, even while you have them, as well as when you leave them. It is one thing for a man to have riches and full barns, and another thing to have comfort in them, Eccl. v. 19, 20. But now the joy of Christians is a thing inseparable from their enjoyment of Christ: indeed the sense of their

tereſt may be loſt, and ſo the acts of their joy intermitted; but ey always have it in the ſeed, if not in the fruit, Pſal. xcvii. 11. Joy is ſown for the upright;" he hath it ſtill in the principle, and the promiſe.

8. The joy of harveſt-men, for the moſt part, is only in their harveſt, and in ſuch earthly things; take that away, and their joy eaſes. Earthly hearts are acquainted with no higher comforts; ut the people of God can joy in him, and take comfort in their arthly enjoyments too. And what comfort they take in theſe things, much more refined and ſweet than yours; for they enjoy all theſe hings in God, and his love in giving them, puts a ſweetneſs into hem, that you are unacquainted with. Thus you ſee, how far your ys fall ſhort of theirs.

REFLECTIONS.

*A reflection for one that hath a full barn, but no Chriſt.*

1. How have I rejoiced in a thing of nought, nd pleaſed myſelf with a vanity? God hath leſſed me in my fields, and in my ſtores; but ot with ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt. My barns are full of corn, but my ſoul is empty of grace; ommon bounty hath given me a fulneſs of the things of this life; ut what if the meaning of it ſhould be to fat me for the day of laughter? What if this be the whole of my portion from the Lord? What if the language of his providences to my ſoul ſhould be this; Lo! Here I have given thee (with Iſhmael) the fatneſs of the earth? Thou ſhalt not ſay but thou haſt taſted of thy Creator's bounty; but make the moſt of it, for this is all that ever thou ſhalt have from me; here be others in the world, to whom I have denied theſe things, but for them I have reſerved better; for the moſt part they are poor in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Is not this enough to damp all my carnal mirth? Should my conſcience give me ſuch a memento as Abraham, in the parable, gave to Dives; "Remember that thou in thy life-time receiveſt thy good things." Ah! what a cut would that be to all my comforts? A man in a fever hath a lively colour, but a dying heart. I have an appearance, a ſhadow of comfort, but a ſad ſtate of ſoul.

*A reflection for one that hath Chriſt, but no barn.*

2. "Bleſſed be the God and Father of my Lord "Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed me with all ſpiri-"tual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt," Epheſ. i. 3. Though he hath not ſeen fit to give me much of this world in hand, yet it hath pleaſed him to ſettle a rich inheritance upon me by promiſe; the hopes and expectations whereof yield my ſoul more true comfort than all the preſent enjoyments of this world could have done. Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath not given me my portion in this life, that by keeping me from the enjoyment, hath alſo preſerved me from the *ſnares* of a proſperous eſtate?

Lord Jeſus, I have no bags, I have no barns; but thou ſhalt be to me inſtead of all thoſe things. When others rejoice in the fulneſs of their earthly comforts, I will rejoice in the fulneſs of my Chriſt: they have that which (though I have not) I ſhall not want; and I have that which all their riches cannot purchaſe. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul!

*A reflection for one that hath a full barn and Chriſt too.*

3. But, Lord, how am I obliged, above thouſands, to love and praiſe thee! to bleſs and admire thee, who haſt not only plentifully provided for my ſoul, but for my body too! who haſt given me both the upper and the nether ſprings, heaven and earth; things preſent, and things to come! Thou haſt not dealt ſo with all; no, not with all of thy own people: many of them are ſtrangers to the mercies which I enjoy. God hath done great things for me, O my ſoul! what wilt thou do for God? The freer the condition is he hath placed me in, the more am I both obliged and advantaged for his ſervice; and yet, I doubt, it will be found, that many a poor Chriſtian that labours with his hands to get his bread, redeems more hours for God than I do. Lord, make me wiſe to underſtand and anſwer the double end of this gracious diſpenſation! let me beſtow the more of my time upon God, and ſtand ready to miniſter to the neceſſities of his people.

*A reflection for one that hath neither a barn nor a Chriſt.*

4. Oh! what an unhappy wretch am I! that have nothing either in hand, or in hope; am miſerable here, and like to be ſo for ever; had I but an intereſt in Chriſt, as the godly poor have, that would ſweeten all preſent troubles, and ſhew me the end of them. But, alas! I am poor and wicked, contemned of men, and abhorred of God; an object of contempt both to heaven and earth. Lord, look upon ſuch a truly miſerable object with compaſſion, give me a portion with thy people in the world to come, if thou never better my outward condition here! O ſanctify this poverty; bleſs theſe ſtraits and wants, that they may neceſſitate my ſoul to go to Chriſt: make this poverty the way to glory, and I ſhall bleſs thee to eternity that I was poor in this world.

## THE POEM.

OFT have I ſeen, when harveſt's almoſt in,
The laſt load coming, how ſome men have been
Wrapt up with joy, as if that welcome cart
Drew home the very treaſure of their heart;
What joyful ſhoutings, hoopings, hollowing noiſe,
With mingled voices both of men and boys!
To carnal minds there is no greater mirth,
No higher joy, no greater heaven on earth.
He ſpeaks pure paradoxes, that ſhall ſay
Theſe are but trifles to what ſaints enjoy:

But they deſpiſe your ſparks as much as you
Contemn their ſun. Some that could never ſhew
A full ſtuff'd barn, on which you ſet your heart,
But glean, perhaps, the ears behind your cart;
Yet are the gleanings of their comfort more
Than all your harveſt and admired ſtore.
Your mirth is mix'd with ſorrow, theirs is pure;
Yours like a ſhadow fleets, their joys endure.
God gives to you the huſk, to them the pith,
And no heart-ſtinging ſorrows adds therewith.
Though at the gates of death they ſometimes mourn,
No ſooner doth the Lord to them return,
But ſorrow's baniſh'd from their penſive breaſt;
Joy triumphs there, and ſmiles their cheeks inveſt.
Have you beheld, when, with perfumed wings,
Out of the balmy eaſt, bright Phœbus ſprings,
Mounting th' Olympic hill, with what a grace
He views the throne of darkneſs, and doth chaſe
The ſhades of night before him? having hurl'd
His golden beams about this lower world,
How from ſad groves, and ſolitary cells,
Where horrid darkneſs and confuſion dwells,
Batts, owls, and doleful creatures, fly away,
Reſigning to the cheerful birds of day:
Who in thoſe places now do ſit and chant,
Where lately ſuch dire creatures kept their haunt?
Thus grief reſigns to joy; ſighs, groans, and tears
To ſongs triumphant, when the Lord appears.
O matchleſs joy! O countenance divine!
What are thoſe trifles to theſe ſmiles of thine?
May I, with poor Mephiboſheth, be bleſt
With theſe ſweet ſmiles; let Ziba take the reſt.
My life! my treaſure! thou ſhalt ne'er be ſold
For ſilver-hills, or rivers pav'd with gold.
Wert thou but known to worldlings, they would ſcorn
To ſtoop their hearts to ſuch poor things as corn:
For ſo they do, becauſe thou art above
That ſphere wherein their low conceptions move.

## CHAP. XIX.

### Upon the Threshing out of Corn.

*More solid grain with greater strength you thresh,*
*The ablest Christians have the hardest lash.*

#### OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN having to do with divers sorts of grain, some more tough and stubborn, others more free and tender, do not beat all alike on the threshing-floor; but as they have threshals of several sizes, so they bestow on some grain more, on others fewer strokes, according to the different qualities of the grain to be threshed. This observation the prophet Isaiah hath, chap. xxviii. ver. 27. "The fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither "is the cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin, but the fitches "are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod." The manner of beating out the corn in former times was far different from that which is now in use among us: they had the cart-wheel, which was full of iron spokes or teeth, and the hoofs of beasts for the harder sort of grain, as wheat, rye, and barley; a staff or flail for the fitches, and a rod or twig for the cummin; all which instruments were proportioned according to the nature of the grain.

#### APPLICATION.

GOD having to do, in a way of correction, with divers sorts of offenders, doth not use the like severity with them all, but proportions his corrections to their abilities and strength, Jer. xxx. 11. "I will not make a full end of thee, [but will correct thee in "measure] and will not leave thee altogether unpunished:" (q. d.) Afflicted thou must be; my respect to my own glory, and thy good, puts a necessity upon that; but yet I will do it moderately: I will not lay on without measure or mercy, as I intend to do upon the enemies; but will mete out your sufferings in a due proportion, even as a careful physician, in prescribing pills or potions to his patient, hath regard as well to the ability of the patient, as to the nature and quality of the disease; even so thy God, O Israel, will not afflict thee according to the greatness of his power, and his wrath answerable thereunto, Psal. xc. 11. That would break thee to pieces, Psal. lxxviii. 38. Nor yet will he afflict thee according to the demerit of thy sin: as it shall be much less than what I could inflict, so it shall be less than thine iniquities deserve, Ezra ix. 13. Neither my power nor thy desert shall be the rule of my proceedings; but I will do it with moderation and mercy, as thou art able to bear. I that have instructed the husbandman to proportion his instrument to the quality of the grain before him, will exercise the like wisdom and mildness

wards thee. And the ſimilitude betwixt the huſbandman's threſhing his corn, and the Lord's afflicting his people, ſtands in theſe particulars.

1. The huſbandman's end in threſhing the corn is, to ſeparate it from the huſks and chaff; and God's end in afflicting his people is, to ſeparate them from their ſins, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "In meaſure when it "ſhooteth forth, he will debate with it," (i. e.) he will moderately correct them; and what the ends of thoſe corrections are, the next words inform us, "By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be "purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin." God uſes afflictions as we uſe ſoap, to cleanſe away filthineſs, and fetch out ſpots, Dan. xi. 35. He aims not at the deſtruction of their perſons, but of their luſts.

2. If the huſbandman have cockle, darnel, or pernicious tares before him on the floor among his corn, he little regards whether it be bruiſed or battered to pieces by the threſher or not; it is a worthleſs thing, and he ſpares it not. Such cockle and tares are the enemies of God; and when theſe come under his flail, he ſtrikes them without mercy; for theſe the Lord prepares a new ſharp threſhing inſtrument, having teeth, which ſhall beat them to duſt, Iſa. xli. 15. "The daughter of Babylon is like a threſhing-floor; it is time to "threſh her," Jer. li. 33. And when that time is come, then (in alluſion to the beaſt that was to tread out the corn) "Zion's horn "ſhall be of iron, and her hoofs braſs," Mic. iv. 13. He ſmites not his people according to the ſtroke of them that ſmote them; the meaning is, his ſtrokes on them ſhall be deadly ſtrokes: they ſhewed no mercy to Zion; and God will ſhew no mercy to them.

3. When the huſks and chaff are perfectly ſeparated from the grain, then the huſbandman beats it no more. When God hath perfectly purged and ſeparated the ſins of his people, then afflictions ſhall come to a perpetual end; he will never ſmite them again: there is no noiſe of the threſhing inſtrument in heaven; he that beat them with his flail on earth, will put them into his boſom in heaven.

4. Though the huſbandman lays on, and beats his corn as if he was angry with it, yet he loves and highly prizes it; and though God ſtrike and afflict his people, yet he ſets a great value upon them; and it is equally abſurd to infer God's hatred to his people from his afflicting of them, as the huſbandman's hatred of his corn, becauſe he threſhes and beats it; Heb. xii. 6. "Whom the Lord loveth "he correcteth, and chaſteneth every ſon whom he receiveth."

5. Though the huſbandman threſh and beat the corn, yet he will not bruiſe or hurt it, if he can help it; though ſome require more and harder ſtrokes than others, yet none ſhall have more than it can endure. And though the Lord afflict his ſervants, yet he will do them no hurt, Jer. xxv. 6. Some need more rods than others, but none ſhall have more than they can bear; the Lord knows the mea-

ſures and degrees of his ſervants faith and patience, and accordingly ſhall their trials be, Pſal. ciii. 13, 14. "Like as a father pities his "children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knows "their frame, he remembers they are but duſt;" "He makes a "way to eſcape, that they may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13. This care and tenderneſs over his afflicted, is eminently diſcovered in three particulars.

(1.) In not expoſing them to, until he hath prepared them for their trials, Luke xxiv. 49. "Tarry ye at Jeruſalem, until ye be "endued with power from on high." He gives them ſometimes eminent diſcoveries of his love immediately before, and as a preparative to their ſufferings, in the ſtrength whereof they are carried through all.

(2.) Or if not ſo, then he intermixeth ſupporting comfort with their troubles; as you ſometimes ſee the ſun ſhine out while the rain falls. It was ſo with Paul, Acts xxvii. 23. "This night, (and "it was a ſad night indeed) there ſtood by me the angel of the Lord, "whoſe I am."

(3.) In taking off the affliction when they can bear it no longer; 1 Cor. x. 13. "He makes a way to eſcape, that they may be able to "bear it;" Pſal. cxxv. 3. The rod is taken off, "when the righ- "teous is even ready to put forth his hand to iniquity." It is a Jewiſh proverb, When the bricks are doubled, then comes Moſes. And it is a Chriſtian's experience, When the ſpirit is ready to fail, then comes Jeſus, according to that promiſe, Iſa. lvii. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

*A reflection for perſecutors.* 1. How unlike am I to God, in the afflicting of his people? The Lord is pitiful when he ſmites them, but I have been cruel: he is kind to them, when moſt ſevere; but the beſt of my kindneſs to them, may fitly enough be called ſeverity: God ſmites them in love; I have ſmitten them in hatred. Ah! what have I done? God hath uſed me as his hand, Pſal. xvii. 14. or as his rod to afflict them, Jer. x. 7. but his end and mine have widely differed in that action, Iſa. x. 7. I am but the ſcullion, or rather the whiſp to ſcour and cleanſe the veſſels of glory; and when I have done that dirty work, thoſe bright ſouls ſhall be ſet up in heaven, and I caſt into the fire. If he ſhall have judgment without mercy, that ſhewed no mercy, how can I expect mercy from the Lord, whoſe people I have perſecuted mercileſly for his ſake?

*A reflection for ſuch as meet with no affliction.* 2. Is the Lord's wheat thus threſhed on the floor of afflictions; what then ſhall I think of my condition, who proſper and am let alone in the way of ſin? Surely the Lord looks on me as on a weed, and not as his corn; and it is too probable, that I am rather reſerved for burning, than for threſhing.

Some there are whom God loves not ſo well as to ſpend a rod upon them, but ſaith, "Let them alone," Hoſ. iv. 17. but miſerable is their condition, notwithſtanding their impunity! For what is the interpretation but this? I will come to a reckoning with them altogether in hell. Lord, how much better is thy afflicting mercy, than thy ſparing ſeverity! Better is the condition of an afflicted child, than of a rejected baſtard, Heb. xii. 7. Oh, let me rather feel thy rod now, as the rod of a loving Father, than feel thy wrath hereafter, as the wrath of an omnipotent avenger!

*A reflection for an afflicted ſaint.*

3. Well then, deſpond not, O my ſoul! Thou heareſt the huſbandman loves his corn, though he threſheth it; and ſurely, the Lord loves thee not the leſs, becauſe he afflicts thee ſo much. If affliction then be the way to heaven, bleſſed be God for affliction! The threſhing-ſtrokes of God have come thick upon me; by which I may ſee what a tough and ſtubborn heart I have: if one ſtroke would have done the work, he would not have lifted up his hand the ſecond time. I have not had a ſtroke more than I had need of, 1 Pet. i. 6. and by this means he will purge my ſins: bleſſed be God for that! the damned have infinitely more and harder ſtrokes than I, and yet their ſin ſhall never be ſeparated by their ſufferings. Ah ſin! curſed ſin! I am ſo much out of love with thee, that I am willing to endure more than all this to be well rid of thee: all this I ſuffer for thy ſake; but the time is coming when I ſhall be rid of ſin and ſuffering together: meanwhile I am under my own father's hand: ſmite me he may, but hate me he cannot.

## THE POEM.

THE ſacred records tell us, heretofore
God had an altar on a threſhing-floor,
Where threſhing inſtruments devoted were
To ſacred ſervice; ſo you find them here.
I now would teach the threſher to beat forth
A notion from his threſhold much more worth
Than all his corn; and make him underſtand
That ſoul-inſtructing engine in his hand.
With fewer ſtrokes, and lighter will you beat
The oats and barley than the ſtubborn wheat,
Which will require and endure more blows
Than freer grain. Thus deals the Lord by thoſe
Whom he afflicts: he doth not uſe to ſtrike
Offending children with his rod alike;
But on the ableſt ſhoulders doth impoſe
The heavieſt burthens, and the leſs on thoſe
Of weaker grace: he ſhews himſelf a God
Of judgments in his handling of the rod.

God hath a rate-book by him wherein he
Keeps juſt accounts how rich his people be;
What faith, experience, patience, more or leſs
Each one poſſeſſeth, and doth them aſſeſs
According to their ſtock. Such as have not
A martyr's faith, ſhall have no martyr's lot.
The kinds, degrees, and the continuance
Of all their ſuff'rings to a circumſtance
Preſcribed are by him who wiſely ſways
The world, and more than's right on no man lays.
Be man or devil the apothecary,
God's the Phyſician: who can then miſcarry
In ſuch a hand? He never did or will
Suffer the leaſt addition to his bill.
Nor meaſure, nor yet mercy he obſerves
In threſhing Babylon; for ſhe deſerves
His heavieſt ſtrokes; and in his floor ſhe muſt
Be beaten ſhortly with his flail to duſt.
But Sion's God, in meaſure, will debate;
His children he may ſmite, but cannot hate;
He beats them, true, to make their chaff to fly,
That they, like purged golden grains, may lie
In one fair heap, with thoſe bleſs'd ſouls that here
Once in like manner threſh'd and winnow'd were.

## CHAP. XX.

### Upon the winnowing of Corn.

*The fan doth cauſe light chaff to fly away;*
*So ſhall th' ungodly in God's winnowing-day.*

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the corn is threſhed out in the floor where it lies mingled with empty ears, and worthleſs chaff, the huſbandman carries it out altogether into ſome open place; where, having ſpread his ſheet for the preſervation of the grain, he expoſes it all to the wind; the good, by reaſon of its ſolidity, remains upon the ſheet, but the chaff, being light and empty, is partly carried quite away by the wind, and all the reſt ſeparated from the good grain into a diſtinct heap, which is carried away either to the fire, or dung-hill, as a worthleſs thing.

APPLICATION.

MEN have their winnowing-days, and God hath his; a day to ſeparate the chaff from the wheat, the godly from the un-

godly, who ſhall be held up to the wind; but only the wicked ſhall be driven away by it. Such a day God hath in this world, wherein he winnows his wheat, and ſeparates the chaff. There is a double fanning or winnowing of men here in this world; one is *doctrinally*, in which ſenſe I underſtand that ſcripture, Matth. iii. 12. ſpoken of Chriſt, when he was entering upon his miniſterial work: "His fan "is in his hand; and he ſhall thoroughly purge his floor, and gather "his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with un-"quenchable fire." The preaching of the goſpel is as a fan in Chriſt's hand: and it is as much as if John had thus told the Jews, that though there were many hypocritical ones among them, that had now a name and place among the people of God, and gloried in their church-privileges; yet there is a purging blaſt of truth coming, which ſhall make them fly out of the church, as chaff out of the floor. Thus Chriſt winnows or fans the world *doctrinally*: The other is *judiciouſly*, by bringing ſore and grievous trials and ſufferings upon the churches for this very end, that thoſe which are but chaff, i. e. empty and vain profeſſors, may by ſuch winds as theſe be ſeparated from his people.

The church increaſes two ways, and by two diverſe means; *extenſively*, in breadth and numbers; and *intenſively*, in vigour and power; peace and proſperity cauſe the firſt, ſufferings and adverſity the laſt: And well may a day of perſecution be called a winnowing-day, for then are the people of God toſſed to purpoſe, as corn in the ſieve, though nothing but chaff be loſt thereby. Of ſuch a winnowing-day the prophet ſpeaks, Amos ix. 9, 10. "I will ſift the houſe of Iſrael "among all nations, like as corn is ſifted in a ſieve, yet ſhall not the "leaſt grain fall upon the earth; all the ſinners of my people ſhall "die." q. d. I will cauſe great agitations and toſſings among you by "the hands of the Aſſyrians and Babylonians, into whoſe countries you ſhall be diſperſed and ſcattered; yet I will ſo govern thoſe your diſperſions by my *providence*, that not one good grain, one upright ſoul, ſhall eternally periſh, but the ſinners of my people, the refuſe ſtuff, that ſhall periſh.

To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks another prophet, Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Ga-"ther yourſelves together, (or as ſome read) fan yourſelves, yea, fan "yourſelves, before the decree bring forth, and the day paſs as th "chaff." He doth not mean that the time ſhall paſs as the ch but there is the day of affliction and diſtreſs coming, in whic wicked ſhall paſs as the chaff before the wind; and yet, notwith ing all theſe winnowings upon earth, much chaff will ſtill abide the corn; therefore God hath appointed another day for t nowing of the world, even the day of judgment; in refer which it is ſaid, Pſalm i. 4, 5. "The ungodly are not ſo, "like the chaff which the wind drives away; therefore th "ly ſhall not ſtand in judgment, nor ſinners in the congr "the righteous;" i. e. God hath a day wherein he w

world like corn in a ſieve, and then the wicked ſhall appear to be but chaff, which God will eternally ſeparate from his wheat. I will not ſtrain the ſimilitude, but fairly diſplay it in theſe ſeven particulars.

1. The chaff and wheat grow together in the ſame field, and upon the ſame root and ſtalk. In this, wicked men are like chaff, who not only aſſociate with the people of God, but oftentimes ſpring up with them in the ſame family, and from the ſame root, or immediate parents, Mal. i. 2. "Was not Eſau Jacob's brother?" Yet the one was wheat, the other chaff. Inſtances of this are infinite.

2. The huſbandman would never endure the huſks, chaff, and dry ſtalks to remain in the field; if it were not for the good corn's ſake, he would quickly ſet fire to it, but that the corn is among it, which he highly prizeth: And, be aſſured, God would never ſuffer the wicked to abide long in this world, were it not for his own elect that are diſperſed among them: Except the Lord had ſuch a remnant diſperſed in the world, he would quickly ſet fire to the four quarters of it, and make it like Sodom, Iſa. i. 9.

3. The chaff is a very worthleſs thing, the huſbandman cares not what become of it; and of as little worth are wicked men, Prov. x. 20. "The heart of the wicked is little worth." The heart is the principal part of the man, and yet that is but chaff, no worth in it; his hands, his clothes, &c. are worth ſomewhat, but his heart is worth nothing.

4. Though chaff in itſelf be nothing worth, yet it is of ſome uſe to the corn while it is ſtanding in the field; the ſtalk bears up the ear, and the chaff covers the grain, and defends it from the injury of the weather. Thus God makes wicked men of uſe to his people in outward ſociety; they help to ſupport and protect them in this world, Rev. xii. 16. "The earth helped the woman," i. e. worldly men for carnal ends helped the church, when a flood of perſecution was poured out. The church often helps the world, it receives many benefits from the people of God; and ſometimes God over-rules the world to help his church.

5. When the chaff and wheat are both brought forth and held up to the wind in one ſieve, they fall two ways; the wheat falls down upon the floor or ſheet, the chaff is carried quite away: So that although for a time godly and ungodly abide together, yet when this winnowing-time comes, God's wheat ſhall be gathered into his garner then, the chaff ſhall go the other way, Matth. iii. 12.

6. If there be any chaff among the corn, it will appear when it is in a windy day; it cannot poſſibly eſcape if it be well winnowed: How more impoſſible it is for any wicked man to eſcape the cries of God in that day; the cloſet hypocrite ſhall then be detected: God will judge the ſecrets of men, 2 Cor. xvi. "He will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſels of the heart," 1 Cor. iv. 5.

7. *Laſtly*, After corn and chaff are ſeparated by the winnowing wind, they ſhall never lie together in one heap any more: The wicked ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but themſelves thruſt out: There is no chaff in heaven.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Am I an empty vain profeſſor, that wants the pith and ſubſtance of real godlineſs? Then am I but chaff in God's account, though I grow among his corn; the eye of man cannot diſcern my hypocriſy; but when he comes, whoſe fan is in his hand, then how plainly will it be detected? Angels and men ſhall diſcern it, and ſay, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his hope;" How ſhall I abide the day of his coming? Chriſt is the great heart-anatomiſt: Things ſhall not be carried then by names and parties, as they are now; every one ſhall be weighed in a juſt balance, and a *Mene Tekel* written upon every falſe heart: Great will be the perſpicuity of that trial: My own conſcience ſhall join with my judge, and ſhall then acknowledge, that there is not one drop of injuſtice in all that ſea of wrath; and though I am damned, yet I am not wronged. The chaff cannot ſtand before the wind, nor I before the judgment of Chriſt. *A reflection for a cloſe hypocrite.*

2. Is there ſuch a fanning-time coming? Why do not I then ſift my heart every day by ſerious ſelf-examination? No work more important to me, and yet how much have I neglected it? O my ſoul! thou hadſt been better employed in ſearching thine own eſtate in reference to that day, than in prying ſinfully into the hearts, and cenſuring the conditions of other men: Judge thyſelf, and thou ſhalt not be condemned with the world; the work indeed is difficult, but the neglect dangerous: Were I within a few days to ſtand at man's bar, there to be tried for my life, how buſy ſhould I be every hour of the day in writing to any that I thought could befriend me, and ſtudying every advantage to myſelf? And yet what a vaſt difference is there betwixt man's bar and God's? Betwixt a trial for my life, and for my ſoul? Lord, rouze up my ſluggiſh heart by awful and ſolicitous thoughts of that day, leſt I be found amongſt that chaff which ſhall be burnt up with unquenchable fire. *A reflection for one that neglects ſelf-examination.*

5. Fear not, O my ſoul! though there be a blaſt coming which ſhall drive all the chaff into hell, yet it ſhall blow thee no harm. "I know "that when he hath tried me, I ſhall come forth "as gold," Job xxiii. 10. I confeſs I have too much chaff about me, but yet I am not altogether chaff; there is a ſolid work of grace upon my ſoul that will abide the trial: Let the judgment to come be as impartial and exact as it is poſſible to be, yet a grain of ſincerity *A reflection for a ſincere ſoul.*

cannot be loſt in it: for "God will not caſt away a perfect (i. e. an upright-hearted) man," Job viii. 20. He that is appointed to judge the world is mine; and his imputed righteouſneſs will make me full weight in the balance. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, for ſincerity! this will abide, when common gifts and empty names will flee as the chaff before the wind.

## THE POEM.

THE winnowing wind firſt drives the chaff away,
Next light and hollow grains; thoſe only ſtay
Whoſe weight and ſolid ſubſtance can endure
This trial, and ſuch grains are counted pure.
The corn for uſe is carefully preſerv'd;
The uſeleſs chaff for burning flames reſerv'd.
*No wind but blows ſome good*, a proverb is;
Glad ſhall I be if it hold true in this.
O that the wind, when you to winnowing go,
This ſpiritual good unto your ſouls might blow!
To make you pauſe, and ſadly ruminate,
In what a doleful plight and wretched ſtate
Their poor ſouls are who cannot hope to ſtand
When he ſhall come, whoſe fan is in his hand;
His piercing eyes infallibly diſcloſe
The very reins, and inward part of thoſe
Whoſe out-ſide ſeeming grace ſo neatly paints,
That, with the beſt, they paſs for real ſaints.
No hypocrite with God acceptance finds,
But, like the chaff, diſpers'd by furious winds.
Their guilt ſhall not that ſearching day endure,
Nor they approach th' aſſemblies of the pure.
Have you obſerv'd in autumn, thiſtle-down,
By howling Æolus ſcatter'd up and down
About the fields? Ev'n ſo God's ireful ſtorm
Shall chaſe the hypocrite, who now can ſcorn
The breath of cloſe reproofs; and like a rock,
Repel reproofs, and juſt reprovers mock.
How many that in ſplendid garments walk,
Of high profeſſions, and like angels talk,
Shall God diveſt, and openly proclaim
Their ſecret guilt to their eternal ſhame?
This is the day wherein the Lord will rid
His church of thoſe falſe friends, who now lie hid
Among his people; there will not one
Falſe heart remain, to loſe our love upon.
O bleſs'd aſſembly! glorious ſtate! when all
In their uprightneſs walk, and ever ſhall.

O make my heart ſincere, that I may never
Prove ſuch light chaff as then thy wind ſhall ſever
From ſolid grain! O let my ſoul deteſt
Unſoundneſs, and abide thy ſtricteſt teſt!

---

AN

# *INTRODUCTION*

To the Second Part of

# HUSBANDRY.

HOW is it, reader, have I tired thee,
Whilſt through theſe pleaſant fields thou walk'ſt with me?
Our path was pleaſant; but if length of way
Do weary thee, we'll ſlack our pace and ſtay:
Let's ſit a while, under the cooling ſhade
Of fragrant trees; trees were for ſhadow made.
Lo here a pleaſant grove, whoſe ſhade is good;
But more than ſo, 'twill yield us fruit for food:
No dangerous fruits do on theſe branches grow,
No ſnakes among the verdant graſs below;
Here we'll repoſe a while, and then go view
The pleaſant herds and flocks; and ſo adieu.

## CHAP. I.

### Upon the Ingraffing of Fruit-trees.

*Ungraffed trees can never bear good fruit;*
*Nor we, till graffed on a better root.*

OBSERVATION.

A WILD tree naturally ſpringing up in the wood or hedge, and never graffed or removed from its native ſoil, may bear ſome fruit, and that fair and beautiful to the eye; but it will give you no content at all in eating, being always harſh, ſour, and unpleaſant to the taſte; but if ſuch a ſtock be removed into a good ſoil, and graffed with a better kind, it may become a good tree, and yield ſtore of choice and pleaſant fruit.

APPLICATION.

UNREGENERATE men, who never were acquainted with the myſtery of ſpiritual union with Jeſus Chriſt, but ſtill grow up-

on their natural root, old Adam, may, by the force and power of natural principles, bring forth ſome fruit, which, like the wild hedge-fruit we ſpeak of, may, indeed, be fair and pleaſant to the eyes of men, but God takes no pleaſure at all in it; it is ſour, harſh, and diſtaſteful to him, becauſe it ſprings not from the Spirit of Chriſt, Iſa. i. 13. "I cannot away with it, it is iniquity," &c. But that I may not entangle the thread of my diſcourſe, I ſhall (as in the former chapters) ſet before you a parallel betwixt the beſt fruits of natural men, and thoſe of a wild ungraffed tree.

1. The root that bears this wild fruit is a degenerate root, and that is the cauſe of all this ſourneſs and harſhneſs in the fruit it bears; it is the ſeed of ſome better tree accidentally blown, or caſt into ſome waſte and bad ſoil, where not being manured and ordered aright, it is turned wild: So all the fruits of unregenerate men flow from the firſt Adam, a corrupt and degenerate root; he was indeed planted a right ſeed, but ſoon turned a wild and degenerate plant; he being the root from which every man naturally ſprings, corrupts all the fruit that any man bears from him. It is obſerved by Gregory pertinently to my preſent purpoſe, *Genus humanum in parente primo, velut in radice putruit:* Mankind was putrified in the root of its firſt parent; Matth. vii. 18. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

2. This corrupt root ſpoils the fruit, by the tranſmiſſion of its ſour and naughty ſap into all the branches and fruits that grow upon it; they ſuck no other nouriſhment, but what the root affords them, and that being bad, ſpoils all; for the ſame cauſe and reaſon, no mere natural or unregenerate man can ever do one holy or acceptable action, becauſe the corruption of the root is in all thoſe actions. The neceſſity of our drawing corruption into all our actions, from this curſed root Adam, is expreſſed by a quick and ſmart interrogation, Job xiv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an "unclean? Not one." The ſenſe of it is well delivered us (by Mr Caryl, *in loc.*) This queſtion (ſaith he) may undergo a twofold conſtruction. Firſt, thus, Who can bring a morally clean perſon out of a perſon originally unclean? and ſo he lays his hand upon his birth-ſin. Or, Secondly, which ſpeaks to my purpoſe, it may refer to the action of the ſame man; man being unclean, cannot bring forth a clean thing; i. e. a clean or holy action; that which is originated is like its original. And that this ſour ſap of the firſt ſtock (I mean Adam's ſin) is tranſmitted into all mankind, not only corrupting their fruit, but ruining and withering all the branches, the apoſtle ſhews us in that excellent parallel betwixt the two Adam's, Rom. v. 12. "Wherefore, as by one man [one, not only *in individuo, ſed* "*in ſpecie*, one repreſenting the whole root or ſtock,] ſin entered in-"to the world:" not by imitation only, but by propagation; and this brought death and ruin upon all the branches.

3. Although theſe wild hedge-fruits be unwholeſome and unpleaſant to the taſte, yet they are fair and beautiful to the eye: a man

that looks upon them, and doth not know what fruit it is, would judge it by its ſhew and colour, to be excellent fruit; for it makes a fairer ſhew oftentimes than the beſt and moſt wholeſome fruit doth: even ſo, theſe natural gifts and endowments which ſome unregenerate perſons have, ſeem exceeding fair to the eye, and a fruit to be deſired. What excellent qualities have ſome mere natural men and women! what a winning affability, humble condeſcenſion, meekneſs, righteouſneſs, ingenuous tenderneſs, and ſweetneſs of nature! As it was (hyperbolically enough) ſaid of one, *In hoc homine, non peccavit Adam:* Adam never ſinned in this man; meaning that he excelled the generality of Adam's children in ſweetneſs of temper and natural endowments. What curious phantaſies, nimble wits, ſolid judgments, tenacious memories, rare elocution, &c. are to be found among mere natural men! by which they are aſſiſted in diſcourſing, praying, preaching and writing to the admiration of ſuch as know them. But that which is highly eſteemed of men, is abomination to God, Luke xvi. 15. It finds no acceptance with him, becauſe it ſprings from that curſed root of nature, and is not the production of his own Spirit.

4. If ſuch a ſtock were removed into a better ſoil, and graffed with a better kind, it might bring forth fruit pleaſant and grateful to the huſbandman; and if ſuch perſons (before deſcribed) were but regenerated and changed in their ſpirits and principles, what excellent and uſeful perſons would they be in the church of God? And then their fruits would be ſweet and acceptable to him. One obſerves of Tertullian, Origen, and Jerom, that they came into Canaan laden with Egyptian gold, i. e. they came into the church full of excellent human learning, which did Chriſt much ſervice.

5. When the huſbandman cuts down his woods or hedges, he cuts down theſe crab ſtocks with the reſt, becauſe he values them not any more than the thorns and brambles among which they grow; and as little will God regard or ſpare theſe natural branches, how much ſoever they are laden with ſuch fruit. The threatening is univerſal, John iii. 3. "Except you be regenerate, and born again, "you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." And again, Heb. xii. 14. "Without holineſs no man (be his natural gifts never ſo ex-"cellent) ſhall ſee God." Embelliſhed nature, is nature ſtill; "That which is born of the fleſh, is *but* fleſh," however it be ſet off with advantage to the eye of man.

## REFLECTIONS.

1. To what purpoſe then do I glory in my natural accompliſhments? Though I have a better nature than ſome others have, yet it is a curſed nature ſtill. Theſe ſweet qualities and excellent gifts, do only hide, but not kill the corruption of nature, I am but a rotten poſt gilded over, and all my duties but hedge-fruit, which

*A reflection for an accompliſhed naturaliſt.*

God makes no account of. O cutting thought! that the unlearned shall rise and take heaven, when I with all my excellent gifts shall descend into hell. Heaven was not made for scholars, as such, but for believers; as one said, when they comforted him upon his death-bed, that he was a knowing man, *a doctor of divinity;* O, said he, I shall not appear before God as a *doctor*, but as a man; I shall stand upon a level with the most illiterate in the day of judgment. What doth it avail me that I have a nimble wit, whilst I have none to do myself good? Will my judge be charmed with a rhetorical tongue? Things will not be carried in that world as they are in this. If I could, with Berengarius, discourse *de omni scibili*, of every thing that is knowable; or with Solomon, unravel nature from the *cedar* to the *hyssop*, what would this advantage me, as long as I am ignorant of Christ, and the mystery of regeneration? My head hath often ached with study, but when did my heart ach for sin? Methinks, O my soul! thou trimmest up thyself in these natural ornaments, to appear before God, as much as that delicate Agag did, when he was to come before Samuel, and fondly conceited that these things would procure favour, or, at least, pity from him; but yet think not, for all that, *the bitterness of death is past:* Say not within thyself, will God cast such a one as I into hell? Shall a man of such parts be damned? Alas! Justice will hew thee to pieces, as Samuel did that spruce king, and not abate thee the least for these things; many thousand branches of nature, as fair and fruitful as thyself, are now blazing in hell, because not transplanted by regeneration into Christ: and if he spared not them, neither will he spare thee.

*A reflection for a true, but weak believer.*

2. I am a poor despised shrub, which have no beauty at all in me, and yet such a one hath the Lord chosen to transplant into Christ, whilst he left many fragrant branches standing on their native stock, to be fuel of his wrath to all eternity! O grace! for ever to be admired! Ah! what cause have I to be thankful to free grace, and for ever to walk humbly with my God! the Lord hath therefore chosen an unlikely, rugged, and unpolished creature as I am, that pride may for ever be hid from mine eyes, and that I may ever glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 29. I now have the advantage of a better root and soil than any carnal person hath; it will therefore be a greater shame to me, and a reproach to the root that bears me, if I should be outstripped and excelled by them; yet, Lord, how often do I find it so? I see some of them meek and patient, whilst I am rough and surly; generous and noble, whilst I am base and penurious. Truly such a branch as I am, is no honour to the root that bears it.

## THE POEM.

I Am a branch of that fair Eden tree
Which to mankind God hath ordain'd to be

The common ſtock: his ſituation good,
His branches many, of himſelf a wood;
And like a cedar by the river fed,
Unto the clouds his ample branches ſpread:
Sin ſmote his root, then juſtice cut him down,
And levell'd with the earth his lofty crown.
What hope of branches when the tree's o'erturn'd,
But like dry faggots to be bound and burn'd?
It had been ſo, had not tranſcendent love,
Which in a ſphere above our thoughts doth move,
Prepar'd a better ſtock to ſave and nouriſh
Tranſplanted twigs, which in him thrive and flouriſh.
In Adam all are curs'd; no ſaving fruit
Shall ever ſpring from that ſin-blaſted root:
Yea, all the branches that in him are found,
How flouriſhing ſoever, muſt be bound
And pil'd together (horrid news to tell!)
To make an everlaſting blaze in hell.
God takes no pleaſure in the ſweeteſt bud
Diſcloſ'd by nature; for the root's not good,
Some boughs, indeed, richly adorned are
With natural fruits, which to the eye are fair;
Rare gifts, ſweet diſpoſitions, which attract
The love of thouſands. and from moſt exact
Honour and admiration. You'll admire
That ſuch as theſe are fuel for the fire.
Indeed, ten thouſand pities 'tis to ſee
Such lovely creatures in this caſe to be.
Did they by true regeneration draw
The ſap of life from Jeſſe's root, the law,
By which they now to wrath condemned are,
Would ceaſe to curſe, and God ſuch buds would ſpare:
But out of him there's none of theſe can move
His unrelenting heart, or draw his love.
Then cut me off from this accurſed tree,
Leſt I for ever be cut off from thee.

## CHAP. II.

### Upon the union of the Graff with the Stock.

*Whene'er you bud and graff, therein you ſee,*
*How Chriſt and ſouls muſt here united be.*

#### OBSERVATION.

WHEN the huſbandman hath prepared his graffs in the ſeaſon of the year, he carries them, with the tools that are neceſſary for that work, to the tree or ſtock he intends to ingraff, and

having cut off the top of the limb in some smooth part, he cleaves it with his knife or chisel a little beside the pith, knocks in his wedge to keep it open, then (having prepared the graff) he carefully sets it into the cleft, joining the inner side of the barks of graff and stock together (there being the main current of the sap) then pulls out his wedge, binds both together (as in barking) and clays it up, to defend the tender graff and wounded stock from the injuries of the sun and rain.

These tender cyons quickly take hold of the stock, and having immediate coalition with it, drink in its sap, concoct it into their own nourishment, thrive better, and bear more and better fruits than ever they would have done upon their natural root; yea, the smallest bud, being carefully inoculated and bound close to the stock, will, in a short time, become a flourishing and fruitful limb.

APPLICATION.

THIS carries a most sweet and lively resemblance of the soul's union with Christ by faith; and indeed there is nothing in nature that shadows forth this great gospel-mystery like it: It is a thousand pities that any who are employed about, or are but spectators of such an action, should terminate their thoughts (as too many do) in that natural object, and not raise up their hearts to these heavenly meditations, which it so fairly offers them.

1. When a twig is to be ingraffed, or a bud inoculated, it is first cut off by a keen knife from the tree on which it naturally grew.

And when the Lord intends to graff a soul into Christ, the first work about it, is cutting work, Acts ii. 37. their hearts were cut by conviction, and deep compunction; no cyon is ingraffed without cutting, no soul united with Christ, without a cutting sense of sin and misery, John xvi. 8, 9.

2. When the tender shoot is cut off from the tree, there are, ordinarily, many more left behind upon the same tree, as promising and vigorous as that which is taken; but it pleaseth the husbandman to chuse this, and leave them.

Even so it is in the removing or transplanting of a soul by conversion; it leaves many behind it in the state of nature, as likely and promising as itself; but so it pleaseth God to take this soul, and leave many others; yea, often such as grew upon the same root; I mean, the immediate parent, Mal. i. 2. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? "saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau."

3. When the graffs are cut off, in order to this work, it is a critical season with them: if they lie too long before they are ingraffed, or take not with the stock, they die, and are never more to be recovered; they may stand in the stock a while, but are no part of the tree.

So when souls are under a work of conviction, it is a critical time with them; many a one have I known then to miscarry, and never recover again: they have indeed for a time stood like dead graffs

n the ſtock, by an external dead-hearted profeſſion, but never came to any thing; and as ſuch dead graffs, either fall off from the ſtock, or moulder away upon it; ſo do theſe, 1 John ii. 19.

4. The huſbandman, when he hath cut off graffs, or tender buds, makes all the convenient ſpeed he can to cloſe them with the ſtock; the ſooner that's done, the better; they get no good by remaining as they are. And truly it concerns the ſervants of the Lord, who are imployed in this work of ingraffing ſouls into Chriſt, to make all the haſte they can to bring the convicted ſinner to a cloſure with Chriſt. As ſoon as ever the trembling jailor cried, "What ſhall I do to be "ſaved?" Paul and Silas immediately direct him to Chriſt, Acts xvi. 30, 31. They do not ſay, it is too ſoon for thee to act faith on Chriſt, thou are not yet humbled enough, but "believe in the Lord Jeſus "Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved."

5. There muſt be an inciſion made in the ſtock before any bud can be inoculated; or the ſtock muſt be cut and cleaved, before the cyon can be ingraffed; according to that in the poet,

*Venerit inſitio, fac ramum ramus adoptet;* i. e.
*To graffs no living ſap the ſtocks impart,*
*Unleſs you wound and cut them near the heart.*

Such an inciſion, or wound, was made upon Chriſt, in order to our ingrafting into him, John xix. 34. the opening of that deadly wound gives life to the ſouls of believers.

6. The graff is intimately united, and cloſely conjoined with the ſtock; the conjunction is ſo cloſe, that they become one tree.

There is alſo a moſt cloſe and intimate union betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul that believeth in him. It is emphatically expreſſed by the apoſtle, 1 Cor. vi. 17. "He that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit." The word imports the neareſt, cloſeſt, and ſtricteſt union. Chriſt and the ſoul cleave together in a bleſſed oneneſs, as thoſe things do that are glued one to another; ſo that look as the graff is really in the ſtock, and the ſpirit or ſap of the ſtock is really in the graff; ſo a believer is really (though myſtically) in Chriſt, and the Spirit of Chriſt is really communicated to a believer. "I live, (ſaith Paul) yet not I, "but Chriſt liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. "He that dwelleth in love, "dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 16.

7. Graffs are bound to the ſtock by bands made of hay or flags; theſe keep it ſteady, elſe the wind would looſe it out of the ſtock.

The believing ſoul is alſo faſtened to Chriſt by bands, which will ſecure it from all danger of being looſed off from him any more. There are two bands of this union; the Spirit on God's part, this is the firm bond of union, without which we could never be made one with Chriſt, Rom. viii. 9. "If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, "he is none of his;" and *faith* on our part, Eph. iii. 17. "That "Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith." Theſe hold ſtrongly.

8. Though the ſtock be one and the ſame, yet all graffs do not

thrive and flouriſh alike in it; ſome outgrow the reſt, and thoſe that grow not ſo well as the others do, the fault is in them, and not in the ſtock: ſo it is with ſouls really united to Chriſt; all do not flouriſh alike in him, the faith of ſome grows exceedingly, 2 Theſſ. i. 3. the things that be in others are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. and ſuch ſouls muſt charge the fault upon themſelves. Chriſt ſends up living ſap enough, not only to make all that are in him living, but fruitful branches.

REFLECTIONS.

*Four comfortable reflections for a regenerate ſoul.*

1. Is it ſo indeed betwixt Chriſt and my ſoul, as it is betwixt the ingraffed cyon and the ſtock? What honour and glory then hath Chriſt conferred upon me, a poor unworthy creature! What! to be made one with him, to be a living branch of him, to be joined thus to the Lord! Oh! what a preferment is this! It is but a little while ſince I was a wild and curſed plant, growing in the wilderneſs amongſt them that ſhall ſhortly be cut down and faggotted up for hell; for me to be taken from amongſt them, and planted into Chriſt. O my ſoul! fall down and kiſs the feet of free grace, that moved ſo freely towards ſo vile a creature! The dignities and honours of the kings and nobles of the earth, are nothing to mine. It was truly confeſſed by one of them, that it is a greater honour to be a member of Chriſt, than the head of an empire. Do I ſay, a greater honour than is put upon the kings of the earth? I might have ſaid, it is a greater honour than is put upon the angels of heaven: For "to whom of them ſaid Chriſt, at any time, thou art "bone of my bone, and fleſh of my fleſh? Behold what manner of "love is this!" 1 John iii. 1.

2. Look again upon the ingraffed cyons, O my ſoul! and thou ſhalt find, that when once they have taken hold of the ſtock, they live as long as there is any ſap in the root; and becauſe he liveth, I ſhall live alſo, for my life is hid with Chriſt in God, Col. iii. 3. The graff is preſerved in the ſtock, and my ſoul is even ſo "preſerved in "Chriſt Jeſus!" Jude, ver. 1.

3. Am I joined to the Lord as a myſtical part or branch of him? How dear art thou then, O my ſoul, to the God and Father of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt! What! a branch of his dear Son! What can God with-hold from one ſo ingraffed? Eph. i. 6. "All is yours, "(ſaith my God) for ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 23.

4. Once more, draw matter of inſtruction as well as comfort from this ſweet obſervation: ſeeing God hath put all this honour upon thee, by this moſt intimate union with his Chriſt, look to it, my ſoul, that thou live and walk as becomes a ſoul thus one with the Lord: be thou tender over his glory: doth not that which ſtrikes at the root, ſtrike at the very life of the graff? And ſhall not that which ſtrikes

at the very glory of Christ, tenderly touch and affect thee? Yea, be thou tenderly affected with all the reproaches that fall upon him from abroad, but especially with those that redound to him from thine own unfruitfulness. Oh! disgrace not the root that bears thee! let it never be said, that any evil fruit is found upon a branch that lives and is fed by such a root.

## THE POEM.

OH! what considering serious man can see
The close conjunction of the graff and tree;
And whilst he contemplates, he doth not find
This meditation graffed on his mind?
I am the branch, and Christ the vine;
Thy gracious hand did pluck
Me from that native stock of mine,
That I his sap might suck.
The bloody spear did in his heart
A deep incision make,
That grace to me he might impart,
And I thereof partake.
The Spirit and faith are that firm band
Which binds us fast together;
Thus we are clasped hand in hand,
And nothing can us sever.
Bless'd be that hand which did remove
Me from my native place!
This was the wonder of thy love,
The triumph of thy grace!
That I, a wild and cursed plant
Should thus preferred be,
Who all those ornaments do want,
Thou may'st in others see.
As long as e'er the root doth live,
The branches are not dry;
Whilst Christ hath grace and life to give,
My soul can never die.
O blessed Saviour! never could
A graff cleave to the tree
More close than thy poor creature would
United be with thee.
My soul, dishonour not the root,
'Twill be a shame for thee
To want the choicest sorts of fruit,
And yet thus graffed be.

Thus you may shake from graffs, before they blow,
More precious fruit than e'er on trees did grow.

## CHAP. III.

### Upon the Gathering in of Fruits in Autumn.

*When trees are shak'd, but little fruit remains,*
*Just such a remnant to the Lord pertains.*

#### OBSERVATION.

IT is a pleasant sight in antumn to see the fruitful branches hanging full of clusters, which weigh the boughs to the ground.

*Aspice curvatos pomorum pondere ramos,*
*Ut sua quod peperit vix ferat arbor onus.*

Which I may thus English.

*O what a pleasant sight it is to see,*
*The fruitful clusters bowing down the tree!*

But these laden branches are soon eased of their burden; for as soon as they are ripe, the husbandman ascends the tree, and shaking the limbs with all his might, causes a fruitful shower to fall like hail-stones upon the ground below; which being gathered to a heap, are carried to the pound, broken all to pieces in a trough, and squeezed to a dry lump in the press, whence all their juice and moisture runs into the fat. How few escape this fat of all those multitudes that grow in the orchard? If you look upon the trees, you may possibly see here one, and there another, two or three upon the utmost branches, but nothing in comparison to the vast number that are thus used.

#### APPLICATION.

THESE small remains of fruit, which are either left upon the tree, or gathered in for an hoard, do well resemble that small number of God's elect in the world, which free-grace hath reserved out of the general ruin of mankind. Four things are excellently shadowed forth to us by this similitude.

1. You see in a fruitful autumn, the trees even oppressed and overladen with the weight of their own fruits, before the shaking time comes, and then they are eased of their burden. Thus the whole creation groans under the weight of their sins, who inhabit it, Rom. viii. 22. the creatures are in bondage, and by an elegant Prosopopeia, are said, both to groan and wait for deliverance. The original sin of man brought an original curse, which burdens the creature, Gen. iii. 17. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; and the actual sin of man "brings actual curses upon the creature, Psalm cvii. 34. Thus the inhabitants of the world load and burden it, as the limbs of a tree are burdened, and sometimes broken with the weight of their own fruit.

2. You may observe in your orchards every year, what abundance of fruits daily fall, either by storms, or of their own accord; but when the shaking time comes, then the ground is covered all over

with fruit. Thus it is with the world, that myſtical tree, with reſpect to men that inhabit it; there is not a year, a day, or hour, in which ſome drop not, as it were, of their own accord, by a natural death; and ſometimes wars and epidemical plagues blow down thouſands together into their graves; theſe are as high winds in a fruitful orchard; but when the ſhaking time, the autumn of the world, comes, then all its inhabitants ſhall be ſhaken down together, either by death, or a tranſlation equivalent thereunto.

3. When fruits are ſhaken down from their trees, then the huſbandman ſeparates them; the far greater part for the pound, and ſome few reſerved for an hoard, which are brought to his table, and eaten with pleaſure. This excellently ſhadows forth that great ſeparation, which Chriſt will make in the end of the world, when ſome ſhall be caſt into the wine-preſs of the Almighty's wrath, and others preſerved for glory.

4. Thoſe fruits which are preſerved on the tree, or in the hoard, are, comparatively, but an handful to thoſe that are broken in the pound; alas! it is ſcarce one of a thouſand, and ſuch a ſmall remnant of elected ſouls hath God reſerved for glory.

I look upon the world as a great tree, conſiſting of four large limbs or branches; this branch or diviſion of it on which we grow, hath, doubtleſs, a greater number of God's elect upon it than the other three; and yet, when I look with a ſerious and conſidering eye upon this fruitful European branch, and ſee how much rotten and withered fruit there grows upon it, it makes me ſay, as Chryſoſtom did of his populous Antioch; Ah, how ſmall a remnant hath *Jeſus Chriſt* among theſe vaſt numbers! "Many indeed are called, but "ah! how few are choſen?" Mat. xx. 16. Alas! they are but as the gleanings when the vintage is done; here and there one upon its utmoſt branches: to allude to that, Iſa. xvii. 6. It was a ſad obſervation which that ſearching ſcholar, Mr Brerewood, long ſince made upon the world; that, dividing it into thirty equal parts, he found no leſs than nineteen of them wholly overſpread with idolatry and heatheniſh darkneſs; and of the eleven remaining parts, no leſs than ſix are Mahometans; ſo that there remains but five of thirty which profeſs the Chriſtian religion at large; and the far greater part of theſe remaining five are invelopped and drowned in popiſh darkneſs; ſo that you ſee the reformed Proteſtant religion is confined to a ſmall ſpot of ground indeed. Now, if from theſe we ſubtract all the groſly ignorant, openly profane, merely civil, and ſecretly hypocritical, judge then in yourſelves, how ſmall a ſcantling of the world falls to Chriſt's ſhare.

Well might Chriſt ſay, Mat. vii. 14. "Narrow is the way, and "ſtrait is the gate that leadeth unto life; and few there be that find "it;" And again, Luke xii. 32. "Fear not little flock." The large piece goes to the devil; a little remnant is Chriſt's, Rom. ix. 27. Saints in ſcripture, are called *jewels*, Mal. iii. 17. Precious pearls

and diamonds, which the Latins call *Uniones*. *Quia nulli duo ſimul reperiuntur*, (ſaith Pliny) becauſe nature gives them not by pairs, but one by one: how many pebbles to one pearl! Suitable to this notion, is that complaint of the prophet, Mic. vii. 1, 2. "Wo is me! for I "am as when they have gathered the ſummer-fruits, as the grape-"gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluſter to eat; my ſoul de-"ſired the firſt ripe fruits; the good man is periſhed out of the earth, "and there is none, (i. e. none comparatively) upright among men." The prophet alludes to a poor hungry man, that, after the gathering time is paſt, comes into an orchard deſiring ſome choice fruit to eat; but, alas! he finds none; there is no cluſter; poſſibly here and there one after the ſhaking time. True ſaints are the world's rarities.

REFLECTIONS.

*A reflection for one that follows the example of the multitude.*

1. What then will be my lot, when that great ſhaking time ſhall come, who have followed the multitude, and gone with the tide of the world? How, even when I have been preſſed to ſtrictneſs and ſingular diligence in the matters of ſalvation, and told what a narrow way the way of life is, have I put it off with this? If it be ſo, then wo to thouſands! Ah, fooliſh heart! Thouſands, and ten thouſands ſhall be woful and miſerable, indeed, to all eternity! Will it be any mitigation of my miſery, that I ſhall have thouſands of miſerable companions with me in hell? Or, will it be admitted for a good plea at the judgment-ſeat, Lord, I did as the generality of my neighbours in the world did; except it were here and there a more preciſe perſon, I ſaw none but lived as I lived. Ah, fooliſh ſinner! is it not better to go to heaven alone, than to hell with company? The worſt courſes have always the moſt imitators; and the road to deſtruction is thronged with paſſengers.

*A reflection for an abuſer of mercy.*

2. And how little better is my condition, who have often fathered the wickedneſs of my own heart, upon the encouragement of mercy? Thus hath my heart pleaded againſt ſtrictneſs and duty; God is a merciful God, and will not be ſo ſevere with the world, to damn ſo many thouſands as are in my condition. Deluded ſoul! if God had damned the whole race of Adam, he had done them no more wrong: yea, there is more mercy in ſaving but one man, than there is of ſeverity and rigour in damning all. How many drunkards and adulterers have lived and died with thy plea in their mouths, "God is a merciful God?" But yet his word expreſsly ſaith, "Be "not deceived; ſuch ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9. God, indeed, is a God of infinite mercy; but he will never exerciſe his mercy to the prejudice of his truth.

3. Oh! what rich grace is here, That in a general ſhipwreck *mer-*

ſy ſhould caſt forth a line or plank to ſave me! That when millions periſh, I, with a few more ſhould eſcape that perdition! Was it the Father's good pleaſure to beſtow the kingdom upon a little flock, and to make me one of that number? What ſingular obligations hath *mercy* put upon my ſoul! The fewer are ſaved, the more cauſe have they that are to admire their ſalvation. If but one of a thouſand had been damned, yet my ſalvation would have been an act of infinite grace; but when ſcarce one of a thouſand are ſaved, what ſhall I call that grace that caſt my lot among them!

*A reflection for an elect ſoul.*

## THE POEM.

HE that with ſpir'tual eyes in autumn ſees
The heaps of fruit which fall from ſhaken trees,
Like ſtorms of hail-ſtones, and can hardly find
One of a thouſand that remains behind;
Methinks this meditation ſhould awake
His ſoul, and make it like thoſe trees, to ſhake.
Of all the cluſters, which ſo lately grew
Upon thoſe trees, how few can they now ſhew?
Here one, and there another; two or three
Upon the utmoſt branches of the tree.
The greateſt numbers to the pound are borne.
Squeez'd in the trough, and all to pieces torn.
This little handful's left, to ſhadow forth
To me God's remnant in this peopl'd earth.
If o'er the whole terreſtrial globe I look,
The goſpel viſits but a little nook.
The reſt with horrid darkneſs overſpread,
Are faſt aſleep, yea, in tranſgreſſion dead.
Whole droves to hell the devil daily drives;
Not one amongſt them once reſiſts or ſtrives.
And in this little heaven-enlightned ſpot,
How faſt an intereſt hath Satan got?
But few of holineſs profeſſion make;
And if from thoſe that do profeſs, I take
The ſelf-deluding hypocrites, I fear
To think how few'll remain that are ſincere.
O tax not mercy that it ſaves ſo few;
But rather wonder that the Lord ſhould ſhew
Mercy to any. Quarrel not with grace;
But for thyſelf God's gracious terms embrace.
When all were ſhipwreck'd, thou ſhould'ſt wonder more
To find thyſelf ſo ſtrangely caſt aſhore,
And there to meet with any that can tell
How narrowly they alſo 'ſcap'd from hell.
The ſmaller number mercy ſaves, the higher
Engagements lie on thee ſtill to admire.

Had the whole ſpecies periſh'd in their ſin,
And not one individual ſaved been,
Yet every tongue before him muſt be mute,
Confeſs his righteouſneſs, but not diſpute.
Or had the hand of mercy which is free,
Taken another, and paſs'd over me;
I ſtill muſt juſtify him, and my tongue
Confeſs my Maker had done me no wrong,
But if my name he pleaſe to let me ſee
Enroll'd among thoſe few that ſaved be,
What admiration ſhould ſuch mercy move!
What thanks, and praiſe, and everlaſting love!

## CHAP. IV.

### Upon the Cutting down of dead Trees.

*Dead barren trees you for the fire prepare;*
*In ſuch a caſe all fruitleſs perſons are.*

#### OBSERVATION.

AFTER many years patience, in the uſe of all means to recover a fruit-tree, if the huſbandman ſee it be quite dead, and that there can be no more expectation of any fruit from it, he brings his ax, and hews it down by the root; and from the orchard it is carried to the fire, it being then fit for nothing elſe; he reckons it imprudent to let ſuch a uſeleſs tree abide in good ground, where another may be planted in its room, that will better pay for the ground it ſtands in. I myſelf once ſaw a large orchard of fair but fruitleſs trees all rooted up, rived abroad, and ricked up for the fire.

#### APPLICATION.

THUS deals the Lord by uſeleſs and barren profeſſors who do but cumber his ground, Matth. iii. 10. "And now alſo the ax is "laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree that brings not "forth good fruit, is hewn down and caſt into the fire." And Luke xiii. 7. "Then ſaid the dreſſer of the vineyard, Behold, theſe three years "I came ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down; "why cumbereth it the ground?" Theſe three years, alluding to the time of his miniſtry, he being at that time entering upon the laſt half-year, as one obſerves, by harmonizing the evangeliſts; ſo long he had waited for the fruit of his miniſtry among thoſe dead-hearted Jews; now his patience is even at an end: cut them down (ſaith he) why cumber they the ground? I will plant others, (viz. the Gentiles) in their room. This hewing down of the barren tree doth, in a lively manner, ſhadow forth God's judicial proceedings againſt formal

and empty profeſſors under the goſpel; and the reſemblance clearly holds in theſe following particulars:

1. The tree that is to be hewn down for the fire, ſtands in the orchard among other flouriſhing trees, where it hath enjoyed the benefit of a good ſoil, a ſtrong fence, and much culture; but being barren, theſe privileges ſecure it not from the fire. It is not our ſtanding in the viſible church by a powerleſs profeſſion among real ſaints with whom we have been aſſociated, and enjoyed the rich and excellent waterings of ordinances, that can ſecure us from the wrath of God, Matth. iii. 8, 9. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and "think not to ſay within yourſelves, we have Abraham to our fa-"ther." Neither Abraham, nor Abraham's God, will acknowledge ſuch degenerate children; if Abraham's faith be not in your hearts, it will be no advantage that Abraham's blood runs in your veins. It will be a poor plea for Judas, when he ſhall ſtand before Chriſt in judgment, to ſay, Lord, I was one of thy family, I preached for thee; I did eat and drink in thy preſence. Let theſe ſcriptures be conſulted, Matth. vii. 22. Matth. xxv. 11, 12. Rom. ii. 17, and 25.

2. The huſbandman doth not preſently cut down the tree becauſe it puts not forth as ſoon as other trees do; but waits as long as there is any hope, and then cuts it down. Thus doth God wait upon barren dead-hearted perſons, from ſabbath to ſabbath, and from year to year: for the Lord is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Thus the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah upon thoſe dry trees, who are now ſmoking and flaming in hell, 1 Pet. iii. 29. He waits long on ſinners, but keeps exact accounts of every year and day of his patience, Luke xiii. 7. "Theſe three years." And Jer. xxv. 3. theſe twenty-three years.

3. When the time is come to cut it down, the dead tree cannot poſſibly reſiſt the ſtroke of the ax; but receives the blow, and falls before it. No more can the ſtouteſt ſinner reſiſt the fatal ſtroke by death, by which the Lord hews him down; Eccl. viii. 8. "There is "no man that hath power over the ſpirit to retain the ſpirit; nei-"ther hath he power in the day of death; and there is no diſcharge "in that war." When the pale horſe comes, away you muſt into the land of darkneſs. Though thou cry with Adrian, O my poor ſoul! whither art thou going? Die thou muſt, thou barren profeſſor; though it were better for thee to do any thing elſe than to die. What a dreadful ſhriek will thy conſcience give when it ſees the ax at thy root, and ſay to thee, as it is Ezek. vii. 6. "An end is come, the "end is come; it watcheth for thee; behold it is come." Oh! ſaith Henry Beauford, (that rich and wretched cardinal, biſhop of Wincheſter, and chancellor of England, when he perceived whereunto he muſt go) wherefore muſt I die? If the whole realm would ſave

my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fie (quoth he) will not death be hired? Will riches do nothing? No, neither riches nor policy can then avail.

4. The ſide to which the tree leaned moſt while it ſtood, that way it will fall when it is cut down; and as it falls, ſo it lies, whether to the ſouth or north, Eccl. xi. 3. So it fares with theſe myſtical trees, I mean fruitleſs profeſſors: Had their hearts and affections inclined and bended heaven-ward whilſt they lived, that way, no doubt, they had fallen at their death; but as their hearts inclined to ſin, and even bended to the world, ſo when God gives the fatal ſtroke, they muſt fall hell-ward and wrath-ward: And, how dreadful will ſuch a fall be!

5. When the dead tree is carried out of the orchard, it ſhall never be among the living trees of the orchard any more; many years it grew among them, but now it ſhall never have a place there again. And when the barren profeſſor is carried out of the world by death, he ſhall never be aſſociated with the ſaints any more: He may then ſay, farewel all ye ſaints, among whom I lived, and with whom I ſo often heard, faſted, and prayed: I ſhall never ſee your face more; Matth. viii. 11, 12. "I ſay unto you, that many ſhall come from the "eaſt, and weſt, and north, and ſouth, and ſhall ſit down with "Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the "children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt forth into outer darkneſs; "there ſhall be weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth."

6. When the dead tree is carried out of the orchard, the huſbandman cuts off its branches, and rives it aſunder with his wedges. This alſo is the lot of barren profeſſors: "The Lord of that ſervant will "come in a day when he looketh not for him, and will cut him "aſunder;" he ſhall be diſſected, or cut abroad, Luke xii. 46.

Now therefore "conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt I tear (or "rend) you in pieces," Pſalm l. 22. O direful day! when the ſame hand that planted, pruned, and watered thee ſo long, and ſo tenderly, ſhall now ſtrike mortal ſtrokes at thee, and that without pity! "For, he that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he "that formed them, will ſhew them no favour," Iſa. xxvii. 11. For the day of mercy is over; and the day of his wrath is fully come.

7. When this tree is cleaved abroad, then its rotten, hollow inſide appears, which was the cauſe of its barrenneſs; it looked like a fair and ſound-bodied tree, but now all may ſee how rotten it is at the heart; ſo will God in that day, when he ſhall diſſect the barren profeſſor, diſcover the rottenneſs of his heart, and unſoundneſs of his principles and ends: Then they who never ſuſpected him before, ſhall ſee what a hollow and rotten-hearted profeſſor he was.

8. Laſtly; The fruitleſs tree is caſt into the fire. This alſo is the end and ſad iſſue of formality, John xv. 6. "He is caſt forth as a branch, "and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt them into the "fire; and they are burned." This is an undoubted truth, that

there is no plant in God's vineyard, but he will have glory from it, by bearing fruit; or glory on it, by burning in the fire. In this fire shall they lie "gnashing their teeth," Luke xiii. 38. and that both in indignation against the saints, whom they shall see in glory; and against Jesus Christ, who would not save them; and against themselves, for losing so foolishly the opportunities of salvation. Do you behold, when you sit by the fire, the froth that boils out of those flaming logs? O think of that foam and rage of those undone creatures, foaming, and gnashing their teeth in that fire which is not quenched! Mark ix. 14.

REFLECTION.

*A reflection for a formal hypocrite.*

How often have I passed by such barren trees, with a more barren heart, as little thinking such a tree to be the *emblem* of myself, as Nebuchadnezzar did, when he saw that tree in a dream, which represented himself, and shadowed forth to him his ensuing misery, Dan. iv. 13. But, O my conscience! my drowsy, sleepy conscience! wert thou but tender, and faithful to me, thou wouldst make as round and terrible an application of such a spectacle to me, as the faithful prophet did to him, ver. 22. And thus wouldst thou, O my soul, bemoan thy condition.

Poor wretch! here I grow, for a little time, among the trees of righteousness, the plants of renown, but I am none of them; I was never planted a right seed; some green and flourishing leaves of profession, indeed, I have, which deceive others, but God cannot be deceived; he sees I am fruitless and rotten at the heart. Poor soul! what will thine end be but burning? Behold, the ax lieth by thy root? and wonder it is, that there it should lie so long, and I yet standing! Still mercy pleads for a fruitless creature: Lord, spare it one year longer. Alas! he need strike no great blow to ruin me; his very breath blows to destruction, Job iv. 9. A frown of his face can blast and ruin me, Psalm lxxx. 6. He is daily solicited by his justice to hew me down, and yet I stand. Lord, cure my barrenness! I know thou hadst rather see fruit than fire upon me.

## THE POEM.

IF, after pains and patience, you can see
No hopes of fruit, down goes the barren tree.
You will not suffer trees that are unsound,
And barren too, to cumber useful ground.
The fatal ax is laid unto the root:
'Tis fit for fire, when unfit for fruit.
But, though this be a dead and barren tree,
Reader, I would not have it so to thee:
May it to thee this serious thought suggest,
In all the orchard this dead tree's the best;

Think on it ſadly, lay it cloſe to heart,
This is the caſe in which thou waſt, or art.
If ſo thou waſt, but now doſt live and grow,
And bring forth fruit, what praiſe and thanks doſt owe
To that wiſe huſbandman that made thee ſo?
O think, when juſtice lifted up its hand,
How mercy did then interceding ſtand!
How pity did on thy behalf appear,
To beg reprieval for another year.
Stop, Lord! forbear him: all hope is not paſt;
He can but be for fire at the laſt.
Though many ſermons, many a gracious call
He hath reſiſted like a brazen wall,
The next may win him; when thy grace ſhall raiſe
Unto itſelf a monument of praiſe.
How ſhould this meditation thaw and melt
The heart of him that hath ſuch mercy felt?
But, if thou ſtill remain a barren tree,
Then here, as in a mirror, thou may'ſt ſee
Thy wretched ſtate, when juſtice, at a blow,
Requites God's patience in thine overthrow.
And canſt thou bear it? Can thy heart endure
To think of everlaſting burnings? Sure,
This muſt thy lot, thy fearful portion be,
If thou continue ſtill a barren tree.

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AN

# *INTRODUCTION*

To the Third Part of

# HUSBANDRY.

NOW, from the pleaſant orchard let us walk
A turn i' th' fields, and there converſe and talk
With cows and horſes; they can teach us ſome
Choice leſſons, though irrational and dumb.
My reader's weary; yet I do not fear
To be forſaken by one reader here:
He'll doubtleſs ſtay to hear what queſtions I
Propound to beaſts, and how they make reply.
The fatted ox, and pamper'd horſe you ride;
Their careleſs maſter for his care thus chide.

## CHAP. I.

### Upon the Huſbandman's Care for his Cattle.

*More care for horſe and oxen many take,*
*Than for their ſouls, or deareſt children's ſake.*

OBSERVATION.

MANY huſbandmen are exceſſively careful about their cattle, riſing themſelves early, or cauſing their ſervants to riſe betimes to provinder and dreſs them. Much time is ſpent in ſome countries, in trimming and adorning their horſes with curious trappings and plumes of feathers; and if at any time their beaſts be ſick, what care is taken to recover and heal them: you will be ſure they ſhall want nothing that is neceſſary for them; yea, many will chuſe rather to want themſelves, than ſuffer their horſes ſo to do; and take a great deal of comfort to ſee them thrive and proſper under their hands.

APPLICATION.

WHAT one ſaid of bloody Herod, who flew ſo many children at Bethlehem, That it were better to be his ſwine than his ſon, may truly enough be applied to ſome parents and maſters, who take leſs care for the ſaving the ſouls of their children and ſervants, than they do for the bodies of thoſe beaſts which daily feed at their ſtalls and cribs. Many there be who do in reference to their ſouls, as Jacob did with reſpect to the preſervation of their bodies, when he put all the herds of cattle before, and his wives and little ones behind, as he went to meet his brother Eſau. It is a weighty ſaying of a grave * author; 'It is vile ingratitude to rejoice when cattle multiply, 'and repine when children increaſe; it is heatheniſh diſtruſtfulneſs 'to fear that he who provides for your beaſts, will not provide for 'your children; and it is no leſs than unnatural cruelty, to be careful 'of the bodies of beaſts, and careleſs of the ſouls of children.' Let us but a little compare your care and diligence in both reſpects, and ſee, in a few particulars, whether you do indeed value your own, or your children and ſervant's ſouls, as you do the life and health of a beaſt.

1. Your care for your very horſes is expreſſed early, whilſt they are but colts, and not come to do you any ſervice; you are willing to be at pains and coſt, to have them broken and brought to their way. This is more than ever many of them did for their children; they can ſee them wild and profane, naturally taking a ſtroke or way of wickedneſs, but yet never were at any pains or coſt to break them; theſe muſt be fondled and cockered up in the natural way of their own cor-

* Jenk. on Jude, part 2. p. 170.

ruption and wickedneſs, and not a rod of reproof uſed to break them of it.

It is obſerved of the Perſians,* that they put out their children to ſchool, as ſoon as they can ſpeak, and will not ſee them in ſeven years after, leſt their indulgence ſhould do them hurt.

2. You keep your conſtant ſet times, *morning* and *evening*, to feed, water, and dreſs your cattle, and will by no means neglect it once: but how many times have you neglected *morning* and *evening* duties in your families? Yea, how many be there, whoſe very tables, in reſpect of any worſhip God hath there, do very little differ from the very cribs and mangers at which their horſes feed? As ſoon as you are up in a morning, you are with your beaſts before you have been with your God. How little do ſuch differ from beaſts? And happy were it, if they were no more accountable to God than their beaſts are.

The end of your care, coſt, and pains about your cattle is, that they may be ſtrong for labour, and the more ſerviceable to you: thus you comply with the end of their beings. But how rare a thing is it to find theſe men as careful to fit their poſterity to be uſeful and ſerviceable to God in their generations, which is the end of their beings? If you can make them rich, and provide good matches for them, you reckon that you have fully diſcharged the duty of parents: if they will learn to hold the plow, that you are willing to teach them: but, when did you ſpend an hour to teach them the way of ſalvation?

Now to convince ſuch careleſs parents of the heinouſneſs of their ſin, let theſe queries be ſolemnly conſidered.

*Qu.* 1. Whether this be a ſufficient diſcharge of that great duty which God hath laid upon Chriſtian parents, in reference to their families? That God hath charged them with the ſouls of their families, is undeniable, Deut. vi. 6, 7. Eph. vi. 4. If God hath not cloathed you with his authority, to command them in the way of the Lord, he would never have charged them ſo ſtrictly to yield you obedience as he hath done, Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20. Well, a great truſt is repoſed in you, look to your duty; for, without diſpute, you ſhall anſwer for it.

*Queſt.* 2. Whether it be likely, if the time of youth (which is the moulding age) be neglected, they will be wrought upon to any good afterwards? Huſbandmen, let me put a ſenſible caſe to you; do you not ſee in your very horſes, that whilſt they are young, you can bring them to any way; but if once they have got a falſe ſtroke, and by long cuſtom it be grown natural to them, then there is no breaking them of it: you ſee it in your very orchards; you may bring a tender twig to grow in what form you pleaſe; but when it is grown to a ſturdy limb, there is no bending it afterwards to any other form than what it naturally took. Thus it is with children, Prov. xxii. 6.

* Clark's Mir. p. 506.

"Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he "will not depart from it."

*Qu.* 3. Whether if you neglect to inſtruct them in the way of the Lord, Satan, and their own natural corruptions, will not inſtruct them in the way to hell? Conſider this, ye careleſs parents: if you will not teach your children, the devil will teach them: if you ſhew them not how to pray, he will ſhew them how to curſe and ſwear, and take the name of the Lord in vain: if you grudge time and pains about their ſouls, the devil doth not. Oh! it is a ſad conſideration, that ſo many children ſhould be put to ſchool to the devil.

*Qu.* 4. What comfort are you like to have from them when they are old, if you bring them not up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord when they are young? Many parents have lived to reap in their old age the fruit of their own folly and careleſſneſs, in the looſe and vain education of their children. By Lycurgus's law, no parent was to be relieved by his children in age, if he gave them not good education in their youth; and it is a law at this day among the Switzers, That if any child be condemned to die for a capital offence, the parents of that child are to be his executioners: theſe laws were made to provoke parents to look better to their charge. Believe this as an undoubted truth, That that child which becomes, through thy default, an inſtrument to diſhonour God, ſhall prove, ſooner or later, a ſon or daughter of ſorrow to thee.

*A reflection for careleſs parents.*

1. God hath found out my ſin this day. This hath been my practice ever ſince I had a family committed to my charge; I have ſpent more time and pains about the bodies of my beaſts, than the ſouls of my children: beaſt that I am for ſo doing! Little have I conſidered the preciouſneſs of my own, or their immortal ſouls. How careful have I been to provide fodder to preſerve my cattle in the winter, whilſt I leave my own and their ſouls to periſh to eternity, and make no proviſion for them? Surely my children will one day curſe the time that ever they were born unto ſuch a cruel father, or of ſuch a mercileſs mother. Should I bring home the plague into my family, and live to ſee all my poor children lie dead by the walls; if I had not the heart of a tyger, ſuch a ſight would melt my heart: and yet the death of their ſouls, by the ſin which I propagated to them, affects me not. Ah! that I could ſay, I had done as much for them, as I have done for a beaſt that periſheth!

*A reflection for the diſobedient child of a gracious parent.*

2. But, unhappy wretch that I am! God caſt a better lot for me; I am the off-ſpring of religious and tender parents, who have always deeply concerned themſelves in the everlaſting *ſtate of my ſoul:* many prayers and tears have they poured out to God for me, both in my hearing, as well as in ſecret; many holy and wholeſome counſels have they from time to time dropt upon me; many precious examples have they ſet in their

own practice before me; many a time when I have ſinned againſt the Lord, have they ſtood over me, with a rod in their hands, and tears in their eyes, uſing all means to reclaim me; but like an ungracious wretch, I have ſlighted all their counſel, grieved their hearts, and imbittered their lives to them by my ſinful courſes. Ah, my ſoul! thou art a degenerate plant; better will it be with the off-ſpring of infidels than with thee, if repentance prevent not: now I live in one family with them, but ſhortly I ſhall be ſeparated from them, as far as hell is from heaven; they now tenderly pity my miſery, but then they ſhall approve and applaud the righteous ſentence of Chriſt upon me: ſo little privilege ſhall I then have from my relation to them, that they ſhall be produced as witneſſes againſt me, and all their rejected counſels, reproofs and examples, charged home upon me, as the aggravations of my wickedneſs; and better it will be, when it ſhall come to that, that I had been brought forth by a beaſt, than ſprung from the loins of ſuch parents.

## THE POEM.

YOUR cattle in fat paſtures thrive and grow,
There's nothing wanting that ſhould make them ſo.
The pamper'd horſe commends his maſter's care,
Who neither pains nor coſt doth grudge or ſpare.
But art not thou mean while the vileſt fool,
That pamper'ſt beaſts, and ſtarves thy precious ſoul?
'Twere well if thou couldſt die as well as live
Like beaſts, and had no more account to give.
O that theſe lines your folly might detect!
Who both your own and children's ſouls neglect
To care for beaſts. O man! prepare to hear
The doleful'ſt language that e'er pierc'd thine ear;
When you your children once in hell ſhall meet,
And with ſuch language their damn'd parents greet
" O curſed father! wretched mother! why
" Was I your off-ſpring? Would to God that I
" Had ſprung from tygers, who more tender be
" Unto their young than you have been to me.
" How did you ſpend your thoughts, time, care, and coſt
" About my body, whilſt my ſoul was loſt?
" Did you not know I had a ſoul, that muſt
" Live, when this body was diſſolv'd to duſt?
" You could not chuſe but underſtand if I,
" Without an intereſt in Chriſt did die,
" It needs muſt come to this. O how could you
" Prove ſo remorſeleſs, and no pity ſhew?
" O cruel parents! I may curſe the day
" That I was born of ſuch as did betray

« Their child to endleſs torments. Now muſt I
« With, and through you, in flames for ever lie."
Let this make every parent tremble, leſt
He loſe his child, whilſt caring for his beaſt:
Or leſt his own poor ſoul do ſtarve and pine,
Whilſt he takes thought for horſes, ſheep and kine.

## CHAP. II.

### Upon the hard Labour, and cruel Uſage of Beaſts.

*When under loads your beaſts do groan, think then*
*How great a mercy 'tis that you are men.*

#### OBSERVATION.

THOUGH ſome men be exceſſively careful and tender over their beaſts, as was noted in the former chapter; yet others are cruel and mercileſs towards them, not regarding how they ride or burden them. How often have I ſeen them fainting under their loads, wrought off their legs, and turned out with galled backs into the fields or high-ways to ſhift for a little graſs; many times have I heard and pitied them, groaning under unreaſonable burdens, and beaten on by mercileſs drivers, till at laſt, by ſuch cruel uſage, they have been deſtroyed, and then caſt into a ditch for dog's meat.

#### APPLICATION.

SUCH ſights as theſe ſhould make men thankful for the mercy of their creation, and bleſs their bountiful Creator, that they were not made ſuch creatures themſelves. Some beaſts are made *ad eſum*, only for food, being no otherwiſe uſeful to men, as *ſwine*, &c. Theſe are only fed for ſlaughter; we kill and eat them, and regard not their cries and ſtrugglings when the knife is thruſt to their very hearts! others are only *ad uſum*, for ſervice, whilſt living, but unprofitable when dead, as *horſes*; theſe we make to drudge and toil for us from day to day, but kill them not: others are both *ad eſum, et uſum*, for food when dead, and ſervice whilſt alive, as the *ox*; theſe we make to plow our fields, draw our carriages, and afterwards prepare them for the ſlaughter.

But man was made for nobler ends, created lord of the lower world; not to ſerve, but to be ſerved by other creatures, a mercy able to melt the hardeſt heart into thankfulneſs. I remember, Luther* preſſing men to be thankful, that they are not brought into



* Luther in 3 Precept.

the loweſt condition of creatures, and to bleſs God that they can ſee any creature below themſelves, gives us a famous inſtance in the following ſtory: Two cardinals (ſaith he) riding in a great deal of pomp to the council of Conſtance, by the way they heard a man in the fields, weeping and wailing bitterly; they rode to him, and aſked him what he ailed? Perceiving his eye intently fixed upon an ugly toad, he told them that his heart melted with the conſideration of this mercy, that God had not made him ſuch a deformed and loathſome creature, though he were formed out of the ſame clay with it: *Hoc eſt quod amarè fleo*, ſaid he, this is that which makes me weep bitterly. Whereupon one of the cardinals cried out, Well, ſaid the father, the unlearned will riſe and take heaven, when we with all our learning ſhall be thruſt into hell. That which melted the heart of this poor man, ſhould melt every heart when we behold the miſery to which theſe poor creatures are ſubjected. And this will appear a mercy of no ſlight conſideration, if we but draw a compariſon betwixt ourſelves and theſe irrational creatures, in theſe three particulars.

1. Though they and we were made of the ſame mould and clay, yet how much better hath God dealt with us, even as to the outward man? The ſtructure of our bodies is much more excellent; God made other good creatures by a word of command, but man by counſel; it was not, Be thou, but, *Let us make man.* We might have been made ſtones without ſenſe, or beaſts without reaſon, but we were made men. The noble ſtructure and ſymmetry of our bodies invite our ſouls not only to thankfulneſs but admiration. David, ſpeaking of the curious frame of the body, ſaith, "I am wonderfully made," Pſal. cxxxix. 14. or, as the vulgar reads it, painted as with a needle, like ſome rich piece of needle-work curiouſly embroidered with nerves and veins. Was any part of the common lump of clay thus faſhioned? Galen gave Epicurus an hundred years time to imagine a more commodious ſituation, configuration, or compoſition of any one part of a human body; and (as one ſaith) if all the angels in heaven had ſtudied to this day, they could not have caſt the body of man into a more curious mould.

2. How little eaſe or reſt have they? They live not many years, and thoſe they do are in bondage and miſery, groaning under the effects of ſin; but God hath provided better for us, even as to our outward condition in the world; we have the more reſt, becauſe they have ſo little. How many refreſhments and comforts hath God provided for us, of which they are incapable? If we be weary with labour, we can take our reſt; but freſh or weary, they muſt ſtand to it, or ſink under it from day to day.

3. What a narrow capacity hath God given to beaſts! What a large capacity to man! Alas, they are only capable of a little ſenſitive pleaſure; as you ſhall ſee ſometimes, how they will friſk in a green paſture; this is all they are capable of, and this death puts an

end to: but how comprehenſive are our ſouls in their capacities? We are made in the image of God; we can look beyond preſent things, and are capable of the higheſt happineſs, and that to all eternity: the ſoul of a beaſt is but a material form, which, wholly depending upon, muſt needs die with the body; but our ſouls are a divine ſpark or blaſt; and when the body dies, it dies not with it, but ſubſiſts even in its ſeparated ſtate.

REFLECTIONS.

*A reflection for an unthankful ſinner.*

1. How great a ſin is ingratitude to God for ſuch a common, but choice mercy of creation and proviſion for me in this world? There is no creature made worſe by kindneſs, but man. There is a kind of gratitude which I may obſerve, even in theſe brute beaſts: they do in their way acknowledge their benefactors; "The ox "knows his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib." How ready are they to ſerve ſuch as feed and cheriſh them? But I have been both unthankful and unſerviceable to my Creator and Benefactor, that hath done me good all my days; thoſe poor creatures that ſweat and groan under the load that I lay upon them, never ſinned againſt God, nor tranſgreſſed the laws of their creation, as I have done; and yet God hath dealt better with me than with them. O that the bounty of God, and his diſtinguiſhing mercy between me and the beaſts that periſh, might move and melt my heart into thankfulneſs! O that I might conſider ſeriouſly what the higher and more excellent end of my creation is, and might more endeavour to anſwer and live up to it! Or elſe, O my ſoul, it will be worſe with thee than the beaſts: it is true, they are under bondage and miſery; but it is but for a little time; death will end all their pains, and eaſe them of all their heavy loads; but I ſhall groan to all eternity, under a heavier burden than ever they felt; they have no account to give, but ſo have I. What comfort is it, that I have a larger capacity than a beaſt hath? That God hath endowed me with reaſon, which is denied to them? Alas! this will but augment my miſery, and enlarge me to take in a greater meaſure of anguiſh.

*A reflection for an elect ſoul.*

2. By how many ſteps, O my ſoul! mayeſt thou aſcend in the praiſes of thy God, when thou conſidereſt the mercies that God hath beſtowed upon thee; not only in that he made thee not a ſtone or tree without ſenſe, or an horſe or dog without reaſon; but that thou art not an infidel without light, or an unregenerate perſon without grace? What! to have ſenſe, and all the delights of it, which ſtones have not! Reaſon, with the more high and noble pleaſures of it, which beaſts have not! the light and knowledge of the great things of the goſpel, which the heathens have not! and ſuch an expectation and hope of inconceivable glory and felicity, which the unſanctified have not! O my ſoul! how rich, how bountiful hath thy

God been to thee! Theſe are the overflowings of his love to thee who waſt moulded out of the ſame lump with the *beaſts* that groan on earth, yea, with the damned that howl in hell: well may I ſay that God hath been a good God to me!

## THE POEM.

WHEN I behold a tired jade put on
With whip and ſpur, till all his ſtrength be gone;
See ſtreams of ſweat run down his bleeding ſides,
How little mercy's ſhewn by him that rides.
If I more thankful to my God would prove
Than ſuch a rider mercileſs, 'twill move
My ſoul to praiſe: For who ſees this, and can
But bleſs the Lord that he was made a man.
And ſuch a ſight the rider ought to move
This meditation duly to improve.
What hath this creature done, that he ſhould be
Thus beaten, wounded, and tir'd out by me?
He is my fellow-creature; 'tis mere grace
I had not been in his, he in my caſe.
Ungrateful, ſtupid man! God might have made
Me bear the ſaddle, as I ſee this jade.
He never ſinn'd, but for my ſin doth lie
Subjected unto all this miſery.
Lord, make my heart relent, that I ſhould be
To thee more uſeleſs than my horſe to me:
He did his utmoſt, went as long as ever
His legs could bear him; but for me I never
Thus ſpent my ſtrength for God, but oft have been
Too prodigal thereof in ways of ſin.
Though he's the horſe, and I the man, 'twill be
Far better with my horſe one day than me:
Unleſs thy grace prevent and ſuperadd
A new creation unto that I had.
Could every reader fix a ſerious thought
On ſuch a ſubject, and hereby be taught
To ſpiritualize it, and improve it thus;
How ſweet would tedious journeys be to us!
But ſuch a taſk a graceleſs heart tires out,
More than the tired horſe I write about.

## CHAP. III.

### Upon the ſeeking of loſt Cattle.

*When ſeeking your loſt cattle, keep in mind,*
*That thus Chriſt Jeſus ſeeks your ſouls to find.*

#### OBSERVATION.

WHEN cattle are ſtrayed away from your fields, you uſe all care and diligence to recover them again; tracing their foot-ſteps, crying them in the market-towns, ſending your ſervants abroad, and enquiring yourſelves of all that you think can give news of them. What care and pains men will take in ſuch caſes, was exemplified in Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 4, 5. who with his ſervant, paſſed through mount Ephraim to ſeek the aſſes that were ſtrayed from his father, and through the land of Shaliſha, and through the land of Shalim, and they were not there, and through the land of the Benjamites, but found them not.

#### APPLICATION.

THE care and pains you take to recover your loſt cattle, carries a ſweet and lively repreſentation of the love of Jeſus Chriſt, in the recovery of loſt ſinners. Jeſus Chriſt came on purpoſe from heaven upon a like errand, to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt, Matth. xviii. 11. There are ſeveral particulars in which this glorious deſign of Chriſt, in ſeeking and ſaving loſt man, and the care and pains of huſbandmen in recovering their loſt cattle, do meet and touch, though there be as many particulars alſo in which they differ: all which I ſhall open under the following heads.

1. We ſometimes find that cattle will break out of thoſe very fields where they have been bred; and where they want nothing that is needful for them. Juſt thus loſt man departed from his God, brake out of that pleaſant encloſure where he was abundantly provided for, both as to ſoul and body; yet then he brake over the hedge of the command, and went aſtray, Eccleſ. vii. 29. "Lo, this only have I "found, that God made man upright, but he ſought out to himſelf "many inventions:" He was not content and ſatisfied with that bleſſed ſtate God had put him into, but would be trying new concluſions, to the loſs and ruin both of himſelf and his poſterity.

2. Strayers are evermore ſufferers for it; all they get by it is to be pined and poinded: And what did man get by departing from his God, but ruin and miſery to ſoul and body? Will you have an abbreviate of his ſufferings and loſſes? The full account none can give you: Why, by ſtraying from his God, he loſt the rectitude and holineſs of his nature; like a true ſtrayer, he is all dirty and miry, overſpread and beſmeared both in ſoul and body with the odious filthineſs

of ſin; he loſt the liberty and freedom of his will to good, a precious jewel of ineſtimable value. This is a real miſery incurred by the fall, though ſome have ſo far loſt their underſtandings and humility, as not to own it; he hath loſt his God, his ſoul, his happineſs, and his very bowels of compaſſion towards himſelf in this miſerable ſtate.

3. When your cattle are ſtrayed, yea, though it be but one of the flock or herd, you leave all the reſt, and go after that which is loſt: So did *Jeſus Chriſt*, who, in the forcited place, Matth. xviii. 12. compares himſelf to ſuch a ſhepherd; he left heaven itſelf, and all the bleſſed *angels* there, to come into this world to ſeek loſt man. O the precious eſteem, and dear love that Chriſt had to poor man! How did his bowels yearn towards us in our low ſtate! How did he pity us in our miſery! As if he had ſaid, poor creatures, they have loſt themſelves, and are become a prey to the devil in a periſhing ſtate; I will ſeek after them, and ſave them. The ſon of man is come to ſeek and to ſave.

4. You are glad when you have found your ſtrayers, much more is Chriſt when he hath found a loſt ſoul. O it is a great ſatisfaction to him to ſee the fruit of the travail of his ſoul, Iſa. liii. "Yea, there "is more joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, than over "ninety-nine juſt perſons that need no repentance." What demonſtrations of joy and gladneſs did the father of the prodigal give, when he had found his ſon that was loſt? Luke xv. 20.

5. When you have brought home your ſtrayers, you ſometimes clog them to prevent their wandering again, and ſtop up the gaps with thorns; and ſo doth God oftentimes by ſuch ſouls as are recovered and brought home to Chriſt; he hangs a clog of affliction to prevent their departure from God again, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

But then there are five particulars in which Chriſt's ſeeking loſt ſouls, and your ſeeking loſt cattle differ.

1. Your cattle ſometimes find the way home themſelves, and return to you of their own accord; but loſt man never did, nor can do ſo; he was his own deſtroyer, but can never be his own ſaviour; it was poſſible for him not to have loſt his God, but having once loſt him, can never find him again of himſelf. Alas! his heart is bent to backſliding, he hath no will to return. Hear how Chriſt complains, John v. 40. "Ye will not come unto me." Man's recovery begins in God, not in himſelf.

2. Your ſervants can find, and bring back your loſt cattle as well as you; but ſo cannot Chriſt's ſervants: Miniſters may diſcover, but cannot recover them: they daily ſee, but cannot ſave them; lament them they can, but help them they cannot; intreat and beg them to return they can, and do, but prevail with them they cannot. Melanchthon thought, when he began to preach, to perſuade all; but old Adam was too hard for young Melanchthon.

3. You ſeek all the cattle that are ſtrayed from you, eſpecially the beſt; but Jeſus Chriſt only ſeeks poor loſt man. There were other

creatures, and such as by nature were more excellent, that lost their God and themselves: I mean, the apostate angels; but he came not to seek them: herein his singular love to man appears.

4. When you have recovered and brought home your lost cattle, you may lose them the second time, and never recover them again; but so cannot Christ. Man once recovered is for ever secured by him. "All that thou hast given me, I have kept, and not one of them is "lost but the son of perdition;" and he was never savingly found, John xvii. 12.

5. Though you prize your cattle, yet you will not venture your life for the recovery of them; rather let them go than regain them with such an hazard; but Jesus Christ not only ventured, but actually laid down his life to recover and save lost man: he redeemed them at the price of his own blood; he is that good shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep. O the surpassing love of Christ to lost souls!

REFLECTIONS.

*A reflection for a lost soul.*

1 Lord, I am a lost creature! an undone soul! and herein lies my misery, that I have not only lost my God, but have no heart to return to him: nay, I fly from Christ, who is come on purpose from heaven to seek and to save me: his messengers are abroad, seeking for such as I am, but I avoid them, or at least refuse to obey their call and persuasions to return. Ah, what a miserable state am I in! Every step I go is a step towards hell; my soul, with the prodigal, is ready to perish in a strange country: but I have no mind, with him, to return home. Wretched soul! what will the end of this be? If God have lost thee, the devil hath found thee; he takes up all strayers from God: yea, death and hell will shortly find thee, if Christ do not; and then thy recovery, O my soul! will be impossible! Why sit I here perishing and dying? I am not yet as irrecoverably lost as the damned are. O let me delay no longer, lest I be lost for ever!

*A reflection for one that was lost, but is found.*

2. O my soul! for ever bless and admire the love of Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to seek and save such a lost soul as I was. Lord, how marvellous! how matchless is thy love! I was lost, and am found: I am found, and did not seek; nay, I am found by him from whom I fled. Thy love, O my Saviour! was a preventing love, a wonderful love; thou lovedst me much more than I loved myself; I was cruel to my own soul, but thou wast kind; thou soughtest for me, a lost sinner, and not for lost angels; thy hand of grace caught hold of me, and hath let go thousands, and ten thousands, as good as myself by nature: like another David, thou didst rescue my poor lost soul out of the mouth of the destroyer; yea, more than so, thou didst lose thine own life to find mine: And now, dear Jesus, since I am thus marvellously recovered,

ſhall I ever ſtraggle again from thee? O let it for ever be a warning to me, how I turn aſide into the by-paths of ſin any more.

## THE POEM.

WHEN cattle from your fields are gone aſtray,
And you to ſeek them through the country ride;
Enquiring for them all along the way,
Tracking their footſteps where they turn'd aſide;
One ſervant this way ſent, another that,
Searching the fields and country round about;
This meditation now falls in ſo pat,
As if God ſent it to enquire you out:
My beaſts are loſt, and ſo am I by ſin;
My wretched ſoul from God thus wand'ring went;
As I ſeek them, ſo was I ſought by him,
Who from the Father's boſom forth was ſent.
Purſu'd by ſermons, follow'd cloſe by grace,
And ſtrong convictions, Chriſt hath ſought for me;
Yea, though I ſhun him, ſtill he gives me chaſe,
As if reſolv'd I ſhould not damned be.
When angels loſt themſelves, it was not ſo;
God did not ſeek, or once for them enquire;
But ſaid, Let theſe apoſtate creatures go,
I'll plague them for it with eternal fire.
Lord! what am I, that thou ſhould'ſt ſet thine eyes,
And ſtill ſeek after ſuch a wretch as I?
Whoſe matchleſs mercy, and rich grace deſpiſe,
As if, in ſpite thereof, reſolv'd to die.
Why ſhould I ſhun thee? Bleſſed Saviour, why
Should I avoid thee thus? Thou doſt not chaſe
My ſoul to ſlay it; O that ever I
Should fly a Saviour that's ſo full of grace!
Long haſt thou ſought me, Lord, I now return,
O let thy bowels of compaſſion ſound;
For my departure I ſincerely mourn,
And let this day thy wand'ring ſheep be found.

## CHAP. IV.

### Upon the Feeding of fat Cattle.

*Fat beaſts you kill, the lean you uſe to ſave:*
*God's diſpenſations ſome ſuch meaning have.*

#### OBSERVATION.

IT is a good obſervation of a Father, and well applied; *Vituli triturantes quotidie ligantur, vituli mactandi quotidie in paſcuis liberè re-*

*aquuntur*: Oxen for uſe are daily yoked and kept ſhort, whilſt thoſe hat are deſigned for the ſhambles, are let looſe in green paſtures to eed at pleaſure. Store beaſts fare hard, and are kept lean and low; eeding beaſts are excuſed from the yoke, whilſt others are laboured nd wrought hard every day; the one hath more than he can eat, he other would eat more if he had it.

APPLICATION.

THUS deals the Lord oft-times with his own elect, whom he deſigns for glory; and with the wicked, who are preparing for he day of wrath: thus are they filled with earthly proſperity and creaure-enjoyments, like luſty and wanton beaſts turned out at liberty in fat paſture, whilſt poor ſaints are kept hard and ſhort; Amos iv. 1. "Hear this word, ye kine of Baſhan, that are in the mountains of "Samaria, which oppreſs the poor, cruſh the needy." Theſe metaphorical kine are the proſperous oppreſſors of the world, full fed, and wanton, wicked men. It is true, heaven hath not all the poor, nor hell all the rich; but it is a very common diſpenſation of providence to beſtow moſt of the things of this world upon them that have no portion in heaven; and to keep them ſhort on earth, for whom that kingdom is provided. Let me draw forth the ſimilitude in a few particulars.

1. The beaſts of ſlaughter have the fatteſt paſtures; ſo have the ungodly in the world; "Their eyes ſtand out with fatneſs: they have "more than heart could wiſh," Pſal. lxxiii. 7. Their hearts are as fat as greaſe, Pſal. cxix. 70. Theſe be they that fleet off the cream of earthly enjoyments, "whoſe bellies are filled with hidden treaſures," Pſal. xvii. 14. "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked," Job ix. 24. O what full eſtates! what an affluence of earthly delights hath God caſt in upon ſome wicked men! There is much wantonneſs, but no want in their dwellings: ſome that know not which way to turn themſelves in hell, once knew not where to beſtow their goods on earth.

2. Feeding beaſts grow wanton in their full paſtures; there you ſhall ſee them tumble and friſk, and kick up their heels. The ſame effect hath the proſperity of the wicked; it makes them wanton; their life is but a diverſion from one pleaſure to another, Job xxi. 11, 12, 13. "They ſend forth their little ones like a flock, and their "children dance: they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the "ſound of the organ: they ſpend their days in wealth, and in a "moment go down to the grave." The ſame character doth the prophet Amos give of them, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. "They ſtretch themſelves upon beds of ivory, drink wine in bowls," &c. and no ſorrow goes to their hearts. Theſe are they that live in pleaſures upon earth, as a fiſh in the water, Jam. v. 5.

3. Theſe fat paſtures do but the ſooner haſten the death of theſe

cattle: the ſooner they are fatted, the ſooner they are ſlaughtered; and the proſperity of the wicked ſerves to the ſame end: the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them; i. e. it ſhall be the means and inſtrument of heating and heightening their luſts, and thereby fitting them for deſtruction; their proſperity is food and fuel to their corruptions. Many wicked men had not been ſo ſoon ripe for hell, had they not grown in the ſunſhine of proſperity.

4. Fatted beaſts do not in the leaſt underſtand the intent and meaning of the huſbandman, in allowing them ſuch large and fat paſtures, which he denies to his other cattle; and as little as beaſts do wicked men underſtand the ſcope and end of God's providences, in caſting proſperity and wealth upon them; little do they think their tables are a ſnare, a gin, and a trap for their ſouls; they only, like beaſts, mind what is before them, but do not at all underſtand the tendency and end of theſe their ſenſual delights.

5. Though the huſbandman keeps his ſtore-cattle in ſhort commons, yet he intends to preſerve them: theſe ſhall remain with him, when the others are driven to the ſlaughter.

Such a deſign of preſervation is carried on in all thoſe outward ſtraits, wants, and hardſhips which the Lord expoſes his people to. I confeſs, ſuch diſpenſations, for the preſent, are very ſtumbling and puzzling things, even to gracious and wiſe perſons. To ſee wicked men, not only exempted from their troubles, but even oppreſſed with proſperity: to ſee a godly man in wants and ſtraits, and a wicked man have more than his heart can wiſh, is a caſe that poſes the wiſeſt Chriſtian, till he conſiders the deſigns and iſſues of both thoſe providences, and then he acquieſces in the wiſdom of God ſo ordering it, Pſal. lxxiii. 5, 14, 18, 23.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Doth my proſperity fat me up for hell, and prepare me for the day of ſlaughter? Little cauſe have I then to glory in it, and lift up my heart upon theſe things. Indeed, God hath given (I cannot ſay bleſſed me with) a fulneſs of creature-enjoyments; upon theſe my carnal heart ſeizeth greedily and ſecurely, not at all ſuſpecting a ſnare lying in theſe things for the ruin of my ſoul. What are all theſe charming pleaſures, but ſo many rattles to quiet my ſoul, whilſt its damnation ſteals inſenſibly upon it? What are all my buſineſſes and employments in the world, but ſo many diverſions from the buſineſs of life? There are but two differences betwixt me and the pooreſt ſlave the devil hath on earth; ſuch are whipped on to hell by outward miſeries, and I am coached to hell in a little more pomp and honour; theſe will have a leſs, and I a greater account in the day of reckoning. O that I had never known proſperity! I am now tumbling in a green paſture, and ſhortly ſhall be hanging up in the ſhambles of hell: if this be the beſt fruit of my

*A reflection for a voluptuous worldling.*

prosperity, if I were taken captive by cruel cannibals, and fed with the richest fare, but withal understood, that the design of it were to fat me up like a beast for them to feed upon, how little stomach should I have to their dainties! O my soul! it were much better for thee to have a sanctified poverty, which is the portion of many saints, than an ensnaring prosperity, set as a trap to ruin thee for ever.

*A reflection for a poor Christian.*

2. The wisdom of my God hath allotted me but short commons here; his providence feeds me, but from hand to mouth; but I am, and well may be, contented with my present state; that which sweetens it is, that I am one of the Lord's preserved. How much better is a morsel of bread and a draught of water here, with an expectancy of glory hereafter, than a fat pasture given in, and a fitting for the wrath to come? Well, since the case stands thus, blessed be God for my present lot! Though I have but a little in hand, I have much in hope; my present troubles will serve to sweeten my future joys; and the sorrows of this life will give a lustre to the glory of the next: that which is now hard to suffer, will then be sweet to remember; my songs will then be louder than my groans now are.

## THE POEM.

THOSE beasts which for the shambles are design'd,
In fragrant flow'ry meadows you shall find,
Where they abound with rich and plenteous fare,
Whilst others graze in commons thin and bare:
Those live a short and pleasant life, but these
Protract their lives in dry and shorter leas.
Thus live the wicked; thus they do abound
With earthly glory, and with honour crown'd.
Their lofty heads unto the stars aspire,
And radiant beams their shining brows attire.
The fattest portion's serv'd up in their dish;
Yea, they have more than their own hearts can wish.
Dissolv'd in pleasures, crown'd with buds of May;
They, for a time, in these fat pastures play,
Frisk, dance and leap, like full-fed beasts; and even
Turn up their wanton heels against the heaven;
Not understanding that this pleasant life,
Serves but to fit them for the butcher's knife.
In fragrant meads they tumbling are to-day,
To-morrow to the slaughter led away.
Their pleasure's gone, and vanish like a bubble,
Which makes their future torments on them double.
Meanwhile God's little flock is poor and lean,
Because the Lord did ne'er intend or mean
This for their portion; and besides doth know
Their souls prove best, where shortest grass doth grow.

Cheer up, poor flock, although your fare be thin,
Yet here is something to take comfort in:
You here securely feed, and need not fear,
Th' infernal butcher can't approach you here.
'Tis somewhat that; but, oh! which far transcends,
Your glorious shepherd's coming, who intends
To lead you hence unto that fragrant hill,
Where, with green pastures, he his flocks will fill;
Or which he from celestial casements pours
The sweetest dews, and constant gracious show'rs;
Along whose banks rivers of pleasures glide,
There his bless'd flocks for ever shall abide,
O envy not the worldlings present joys.
Which to your future mercies are but toys,
Their pasture now is green, your's dry and burn'd,
But then the scene is chang'd, the tables turn'd.

## CHAP. V.

### Upon the Husbandman's Care for Posterity.

*Good husbands labour for posterity;*
*To after-ages saints must have an eye.*

#### OBSERVATION.

PROVIDENT and careful husbandmen do not only labour to supply their own necessities, while living, but lay up something for their posterity when they are gone: they do not only leave to their children what their progenitors left them, but they desire to leave it improved and bettered. None but bad husbands and spend-thrifts are of the mind with that heathen emperor Tiberius, who having put all into such confusions in the empire, that it might be thought the world would end with him; yet pleased himself with this apprehension, That he should be out of the reach of it; and would often say, When I am dead, let heaven and earth mingle; if the world will but hold my time, let it break when I am gone. But provident men look beyond their own time, and do very much concern themselves in the good or evil of their posterity.

#### APPLICATION.

WHAT careful husbands do, with respect to the provisions they make for their children, that all prudent Christians are bound to do, with respect to the truths committed to them, and by them to be transmitted to succeeding saints.

In the first ages of the world, even till the law was given, faithful men were instead of books and records; they did, by oral tradition,

convey the truths of God to poſterity: but ſince the ſacred truth hath been conſigned to writing, no ſuch tradition (except fully conſentient with that written word) is to be received as authentic; but the truths therein delivered to the ſaints, are, by verbal *declarations*, open *confeſſions*, and conſtant *ſufferings*, to be preſerved and delivered from age to age. This was the conſtant care of the whole cloud of witneſſes, both ancient and modern, who have kept the word of God's patience, and would not accept their own lives, liberties, or eſtates, no, nor the whole world in exchange for that invaluable treaſure of truth: they have carefully practiſed Solomon's counſel, Prov. xxiii. 23. "Buy the truth, but ſell it not;" they would not alienate that fair inheritance for all the inheritances on earth. Upon the ſame reaſons that you refuſe to part with, or imbezzle your eſtates, Chriſtians alſo refuſe to part with the truth of God.

1. You will not waſte or alienate your inheritance, becauſe it is precious, and of great value in your eyes; but much more precious are God's truths to his people. Luther profeſſed, he would not take the whole *world* for one leaf of his Bible. Though ſome profane perſons may ſay with Pilate, What is truth? Yet know, that any one truth of the goſpel is more worth than all the inheritances upon earth; they are the great things of God's law; and he that ſells them for the greateſt things in this world, makes a ſoul-undoing bargain.

2. You will not waſte or part with your inheritance, becauſe you know your poſterity will be much wronged by it. They that daffle or drink away an eſtate, drink the tears of their ſad widows, and the very blood of their impoveriſhed children. The people of God do alſo conſider, how much the generations to come are concerned in the conſervation of the truths of God for them: It cuts them to the heart, but to think that their children ſhould be brought up to worſhip dumb idols, and fall down before a wooden and breaden God. The very birds and beaſts will expoſe their own bodies to apparent danger of death, to preſerve their young. Religion doth much more tender the hearts and bowels than nature doth.

3. You reckon it a foul diſgrace to ſell your eſtates, and become bankrupts; it is a word that bears ill among you: and a Chriſtian accounts it the higheſt reproach in the world, to be a *traitor* to, or an apoſtate from the truths of God. When the primitive ſaints were ſtrictly required to deliver up their Bibles, thoſe that did ſo, were juſtly branded, and hiſſed out of their company, under the odious title of *traditores*, or deliverers.

4. You are ſo loth to part with your eſtates, becauſe you know it is hard recovering an eſtate again when once you have loſt it. Chriſtians do alſo know how difficult it will be for the people of God, in times to come, to recover the light of the goſpel again, if once it be extinguiſhed. There is no truth of God recovered out of Antichriſt's hands, without great wreſtlings and much blood. The church may call every point of reformed doctrine and diſcipline ſo

recovered, her Naphtalies; for with great wreſtlings ſhe hath wreſtled for them; "earneſtly contending for the faith once delivered to "them," Jude 3.

5. To conclude; rather than you will part with your eſtates, you will chooſe to ſuffer many wants and hardſhips all your lives; you will fare hard, and go bare, to preſerve what you have for your poſterity: but the people of God have put themſelves upon far greater hardſhips than theſe to preſerve truth; they have choſen to ſuffer reproaches, poverty, priſons, death, and the moſt cruel torments, rather than the loſs of God's truth, all the martyrologies will inform you what their ſufferings have been, to keep the word of God's patience; they have boldly told their enemies, that they might pluck their hearts out of their bodies, but ſhould never pluck the truth out of their hearts.

REFLECTIONS.

*A reflection for cowardly and faint-hearted profeſſors.*

1. Baſe unbelieving heart! How have I flinched and ſunk from truth, when it hath been in danger? I have rather choſen to leave it than my life, liberty, or eſtate, as a prey to the enemy. I have left truth, and juſt it is that the God of truth ſhould leave me. Cowardly ſoul! that durſt not make a ſtand for the truth: yea, rather bold and daring ſoul! that would rather venture to look a wrathful God, than an angry man in the face. I would not own and preſerve the truth, and the God of truth will not own me; 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we deny him, he will deny us."

*A reflection for ſuch as ſuffer for truth.*

2. Lord! unto me haſt thou committed the precious treaſure and truſt of truth; and as I received it, ſo do I deſire to deliver it to the generations to come, that the people which are yet unborn may praiſe the Lord. God forbid I ſhould ever part with ſuch a fair inheritance, and thereby beggar my own, and thouſands of ſouls! Thou haſt given me thy truth, and the world hates me; I well know that it is the ground of the quarrel. Would I but throw truth over the walls, how ſoon would a retreat be ſounded to all perſecutors? But, Lord, thy truth is invaluably precious. What a vile thing is my blood, compared with the leaſt of all thy truths? Thou haſt charged me not to ſell it; and, in thy ſtrength, I reſolve never to paſs a fine, and cut off that golden line whereby thy truths are entailed upon thy people from generation to generation: my friends may go, my liberty may go, my blood may go; but as for thee, precious truth, thou ſhalt never go.

*A reflection for ſuch as are in quiet poſſeſſion of truth.*

3. How dear hath this inheritance of truth coſt ſome Chriſtians? How little hath it coſt us? We are entered into their labours; we reap in peace what they ſowed in tears, yea, in blood. O the grievous ſufferings that they choſe to endure! Rather than to deprive us of ſuch an inheritance, thoſe noble

ſouls, heated with the love of Chriſt, and care for our ſouls, made many bold and brave adventures for it; and yet at what a low rate do we value what coſt them ſo dear? Like young heirs that never knew the getting of an eſtate, we ſpend it freely. Lord, help us thankfully and diligently to improve thy truths, while we are in quiet poſſeſſion of them. Such intervals of peace and reſt are uſually of no long continuance with thy people.

## THE POEM.

A PUBLIC ſpirit ſcorns to plant no root
But ſuch from which himſelf may gather fruit,
For thus he reaſons, If I reap the gains
Of laborious predeceſſors pains,
How equal is it, that poſterity,
Should reap the fruits of preſent induſtry?
Should ev'ry age but ſerve its turn, and take
No thought for future times, it ſoon will make
A bankrupt world, and ſo entail a curſe
From age to age, as it grows worſe and worſe.
Our Chriſtian predeceſſors careful thus
Have been to leave an heritage to us.
Chriſt's precious truth conſerved in their blood,
For no leſs price thoſe truths our fathers ſtood.
They have tranſmitted, would not alienate
From us, their children, ſuch a fair eſtate.
We eat what they did ſet: and ſhall truth fail
In our days? Shall we cut off th' entail,
Or end the line of honour? Nay, what's worſe,
Give future ages cauſe to hate, and curſe
Our memories? Like Naboth, may this age
Part with their blood ſooner than heritage.
Let pity move us, let us think upon
Our children's ſouls, when we are dead and gone:
Shall they, poor ſouls, in darkneſs grope, when we
Put out the light, by which they elſe might ſee
The way to glory? Yea, what's worſe, ſhall it
Be ſaid in time to come, Chriſt did commit
A precious treaſure, purchas'd by his blood,
To us, for ours, and for our children's good!
But we, like cowards, falſe, perfidious men,
For carnal eaſe loſt it, ourſelves, and them.
O let us leave, to after ages, more
Than we receiv'd from all that went before!
That thoſe to-come may bleſs the Lord, and keep
Our names alive, when we in duſt ſhall ſleep.

## CHAP. VI.

### Upon the Huſbandman's Care to prove and preſerve his Deeds.

*Deeds for our lands you prove, and keep with care;*
*O that for heaven you but as careful were!*

#### OBSERVATION.

WE generally find men are not more careful in trying gold, or in keeping it, than they are in examining their deeds, and preſerving them; theſe are virtually their whole eſtate, and therefore it concerns them to be careful of them: if they ſuſpect a flaw in their leaſe or deed, they repair to the ableſt counſel, ſubmit it to his judgment, make the worſt of their cauſe, and query about all the ſuppoſeable danger with him. If he tell them their caſe is ſuſpicious and hazardous, how much are they perplexed and troubled? They can neither eat, drink, nor ſleep in peace, till they have a good ſettlement; and willing they are to be at much coſt and pains to obtain it.

#### APPLICATION.

THESE cares and fears with which you are perplexed in ſuch caſes, may give you a little glimpſe of thoſe troubles of ſoul, with which the people of God are perplexed about their eternal condition; which, perhaps, you have been hitherto unacquainted with, and therefore ſlighted them, as fancies and whimſies: I ſay, your own fears and troubles, if ever you were engaged by a cunning and powerful adverſary in a law-ſuit for your eſtate, may give you a little glimpſe of ſpiritual troubles; and indeed it is no more but a glimpſe of them: for, as the loſs of an earthly, though fair, inheritance, is but a trifle to the loſs of God and the ſoul to eternity; ſo you cannot but imagine, that the cares, fears, and ſolicitudes of ſouls about theſe things, are much, very much beyond yours. Let us compare the caſes, and ſee how they anſwer to each other.

1. You have evidences for your eſtates, and by them you hold what you have in the world: They alſo have evidences for their eſtate in Chriſt, and glory to come; they hold all *in capite*, by virtue of their intermarriage with Jeſus Chriſt; they come to be inſtated in that glorious inheritance contained in the covenant of grace. You have their tenure in that ſcripture, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All is yours, for ye are "Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's." Faith unites them to him, and after they believe, they are ſealed by the Spirit of promiſe, Eph. i. 13. They can lay claim to no promiſe upon any other ground; this is their title to all that they own as theirs.

2. It often falls out, that after the ſealing and executing of your deeds, or leaſes, an adverſary finds ſome dubious clauſe in them, and thereupon commences a ſuit at law with you. Thus it frequently

falls out with the people of God, who after their believing and ſealing time, have doubts and ſcruples raiſed in them about their title. Nothing is more common, than for the devil, and their own unbelief, to ſtart controverſies, and raiſe ſtrong objections againſt their intereſt in Chriſt, and the covenant of promiſes. Theſe are cunning and potent adverſaries, and do maintain long debates with the gracious ſoul, and reaſon ſo cunningly and ſophiſtically with it, that it can by no means extricate and ſatisfy itſelf; always alledging, that their title is worth nothing, which they, poor ſouls, are but too apt to ſuſpect.

3. All the while that a ſuit of law is depending about your title, you have but little comfort or benefit from your eſtate; you cannot look upon it as your own, nor lay out monies in building or dreſſing for fear you ſhould loſe all at laſt. Juſt thus ſtands the caſe with doubting Chriſtians; they have little comfort from the moſt comfortable promiſes, little benefit from the ſweeteſt duties and ordinances: They put off their own comforts, and ſay, if we were ſure that all this were ours, we would then rejoice in them. But, alas! our title is dubious: Chriſt is a precious Chriſt; the promiſes are comfortable things; but what, if they be none of ours? Ah! how little doth the doubting Chriſtian make of his large and rich inheritance?

4. You dare not truſt your own judgments in ſuch caſes, but ſtate your caſe to ſuch as are learned in the laws, and are willing to get the ableſt counſel you can to adviſe you. So are poor doubting Chriſtians; they carry their caſes from Chriſtian to Chriſtian, and from miniſter to miniſter, with ſuch requeſts as theſe: Pray tell me, what do you think of my condition? Deal plainly and faithfully with me; theſe be my grounds of doubting, and theſe my grounds of hope. O hide nothing from me! And if they all agree that the caſe is good, yet they cannot be ſatisfied till God ſay ſo too, and confirm the word of his ſervants; and therefore they carry the caſe often before him in ſuch words as thoſe, Pſalm cxxxix. 23, 24. "Search "me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, "and ſee if there be any wicked way in me."

5. You have little quiet in your ſpirits, till the caſe be reſolved; your meat and drink doth you little good; you cannot ſleep in the night, becauſe theſe troubled thoughts are ever returning upon you; what if I ſhould be turned out of all at laſt? So it is with gracious ſouls; their eyes are held waking in the night, by reaſon of the troubles of their hearts, Pſalm lxxvii. 4. Such fears as theſe are frequently returning upon their hearts, what if I ſhould be found a ſelf-deceiver at laſt? What if I but hug a phantaſm inſtead of Chriſt? How can this, or that, conſiſt with grace? Their meat and drink doth them little good; their bodies are often macerated by the troubles of their ſouls.

6. You will not make the beſt of your condition, when you ſtate your caſe to a faithful counſellor; neither will they, but oftentimes

(poor penſive ſouls) they make it much worſe than indeed it is: charge themſelves with that which God never charged them with; though this be neither their wiſdom, nor their duty; but the fears of miſcarrying make them ſuſpect fraud in all they do or have.

7. Laſtly, When your title is cleared, your hearts are eaſed; yea, not only eaſed, but overjoyed; though not in that degree, nor with the ſame kind of joy with which the hearts of Chriſtians are overflowed, when the Lord ſpeaks peace to their ſouls. O welcome the ſweet morning light, after a tedious night of darkneſs! now they can eat their bread with comfort, and drink their wine, yea, if it be but water, with a merry heart, Eccleſ. ix. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

*The careleſs ſoul's reflection.*

1. O how hath my ſpirit been toſſed and hurried, when I have met with troubles and clamours about my eſtate! But as for ſpiritual troubles, and thoſe ſoul-perplexing caſes, that Chriſtians ſpeak of, I underſtand but little of them. I never called my everlaſting ſtate in queſtion, nor broke an hour's ſleep upon any ſuch account. Ah, my ſupine and careleſs ſoul! little haſt thou regarded how matters ſtand in reference to eternity! I have ſtrongly conceited, but never thoroughly examined the validity of my title to Chriſt, and his promiſes; nor am I able to tell, if my own conſcience ſhould demand, whereupon my claim is grounded.

O my ſoul! why art thou ſo unwilling to examine how matters ſtand betwixt God and thee? Art thou afraid to look into thy condition, leſt by finding thine hypocriſy, thou ſhouldſt loſe thy peace, or rather, thy ſecurity? To what purpoſe will it be to ſhut thine eyes againſt the light of conviction, unleſs thou couldſt alſo find out a way to prevent thy condemnation? Thou ſeeſt other ſouls, how attentively they wait under the word, for any thing that may ſpeak to their condition. Doubtleſs thou haſt heard, how frequently and ſeriouſly they have ſtated their condition, and opened their caſes to the miniſters of Chriſt. But thou, O my ſoul! haſt no ſuch caſes to put, no doubts to be reſolved; thou wilt leave all to the deciſion of the great day, and not trouble thyſelf about it now. Well, God will decide it; but little to thy comfort.

*The doubting ſoul's reflection.*

2. I have heard how ſome have been perplexed by litigious adverſaries; but I believe none have been ſo toſt with fears, and diſtracted with doubts, as I have been about the ſtate of my ſoul. Lord, what ſhall I do? I have often carried my doubts and ſcruples to thine ordinances, waiting for ſatisfaction to be ſpoken there. I have carried them to thoſe I have judged ſkilful and faithful, begging their reſolution and help, but nothing will ſtick. Still my fears are daily renewed. O my God, do thou decide my caſe! tell me how the ſtate ſtands betwixt thee and me; my days conſume in trouble, I can neither do nor

enjoy any good, whilſt things are thus with me; all my earthly enjoyments are dry and uncomfortable things; yea, which is much worſe, all my duties and thine ordinances, prove ſo too, by reaſon of the troubles of my heart: I am no ornament to my profeſſion; nay, I am a diſcouragement and ſtumbling-block to others. "I will "hearken and hear what God the Lord will ſpeak:" O that it might be peace! If thou do not ſpeak it, none can; and when thou doſt, keep thy ſervant from returning again to folly, leſt I make freſh work for an accuſing conſcience, and give new matter to the adverſary of my ſoul.

*The aſſured Chriſtian's reflection.*

3. But thou, my ſoul, enjoyeſt a double mercy from thy bountiful God, who hath not only given thee a ſound title, but alſo the clear evidence and knowledge thereof. I am gathering, and daily feeding upon the full-ripe fruits of aſſurance, which grow upon the top boughs of faith; whilſt many of my poor brethren drink their own tears, and have their teeth broken with gravel ſtones. Lord, thou haſt ſet my ſoul upon her high-places; but let me not exalt myſelf, becauſe thou haſt exalted me, nor grow wanton, becauſe I walk at liberty; leſt for the abuſe of ſuch precious liberty, thou clap my old chains upon me, and ſhut up my ſoul again in priſon.

## THE POEM.

MEN can't be quiet till they be aſſur'd
That their eſtate is good, and well ſecur'd.
To able counſel they their deeds ſubmit,
Intreating them with care t' examine it:
Fearing ſome clauſe an enemy may wreſt,
Or find a flaw; whereby he may diveſt
Them and their children. O who can but ſee
How wiſe men in their generation be!
But do they equal cares and fears expreſs
About their everlaſting happineſs?
In ſpiritual things 'twould grieve one's heart to ſee
What careleſs fools theſe careful men can be.
They act like men of common ſenſe bereaven;
Secure their lands, and they'll truſt God for heaven.
How many caſes have you to ſubmit
To lawyers' judgments? Miniſters may ſit
From week to week, and yet not ſee the face
Of one that brings a ſoul-concerning caſe.
Yea, which is worſe, how ſeldom do you cry
To God for counſel? Or beg him to try
Your hearts, and ſtricteſt inquiſition make
Into your eſtate, diſcover your miſtake?
O ſtupid ſouls! clouded with ignorance,
Is Chriſt and heaven no fair inheritance,

Compar'd with yours? Or is eternity
A ſhorter term than yours, that you ſhould ply
The one ſo cloſe, and totally neglect
The other, as not worth your leaſt reſpect.
Perhaps the devil, whoſe plot from you's conceal'd,
Perſuades your title's good, and firmly ſeal'd
By God's own Spirit; though you never found,
One act of ſaving grace to lay a ground
For that perſuaſion. Soul, he hath thee faſt,
Tho' he'll not let thee know it till the laſt.
Lord, waken ſinners, make them underſtand,
'Twixt thee and them, how rawly matters ſtand:
Give them no quiet reſt until they ſee
Their ſouls ſecur'd better than lands can be.

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# Occaſional MEDITATIONS upon Birds, Beaſts, Trees, Flowers, Rivers, and other Objects.

## *MEDITATIONS ON BIRDS.*

### MEDITATION I.

*Upon the ſinging of a Nightingale.*

WHO that hears ſuch various, raviſhing, and exquiſite melody, would imagine the bird that makes it, to be of ſo ſmall and contemptible a body and feather? Her charming voice engaged not only mine attentive ear, but my feet alſo to make a nearer approach to that ſhady buſh in which that excellent muſician ſat veiled; and the nearer I came, the ſweeter the melody ſtill ſeemed to be; but when I had deſcried the bird herſelf, and found her to be little bigger, and no better feathered than a ſparrow, it gave my thoughts the occaſion of this following application.

This bird ſeems to me the lively emblem of the formal hypocrite; (1.) In that ſhe is more in ſound than ſubſtance, a loud and excellent voice, but a little deſpicable body; and it recalled to my thoughts the ſtory of Plutarch, who hearing a nightingale, deſired to have one killed to feed upon, not queſtioning but ſhe would pleaſe the palate as well as the ear; but when the nightingale was brought him, and he ſaw what a poor little creature it was, Truly, ſaid he, thou art *vox et præterea nihil*,—a mere voice, and nothing elſe; ſo is the hypocrite: did a man hear him ſometimes in more public duties and diſcourſes, O, thinks he, what an excellent man is this! what a choice and rare ſpirit is he of! but follow him home, obſerve him in his private converſation and retirements, and then you will judge Plutarch's note as applicable to him as the nightingale. (2.) This bird is obſerved to

harm moſt ſweetly, and ſet her ſpirits all on work, when ſhe perceives ſhe hath engaged attention; ſo doth the hypocrite, who lives and feeds upon the applauſe and commendation of his admirers, and cares little for any of thoſe duties which bring in no returns of praiſe from men: he is little pleaſed with a ſilent melody and private pleaſure betwixt God and his own ſoul.

*Scire tuum nihil eſt niſi te ſcire hoc ſciat alter.*

Alas! his knowledge is not worth a pin,
If he proclaims not what he hath within.

He is more for the theatre than the cloſet; and of ſuch Chriſt ſaith, "Verily they have their reward." (3.) Naturaliſts obſerve the nightingale to be an ambitious bird, that cannot endure to be outvied by any: ſhe will rather chuſe to die than be excelled; a notable inſtance whereof we have in the following pleaſant poem, tranſlated out of Starda, concerning the nightingale and a lutaniſt.

Now the declining ſun did downward bend
From higher heavens, and from his looks did ſend
A milder flame, when near to Tyber's flow,
A lutaniſt allay'd his careful woe
With ſounding charms; and in a greeny ſeat
Of ſhady oak, took ſhelter from the heat;
A nightingale o'erheard him, that did uſe
To ſojourn in the neighbour groves, the muſe
That fill'd the place, the ſyren of the wood
(Poor harmleſs ſyren!) ſtealing near, ſhe ſtood
Cloſe lurking in the leaves attentively
Recording that unwonted melody:
She conn'd it to herſelf; and ev'ry ſtrain
His fingers play'd, her throat return'd again.
The lutaniſt perceiv'd an anſwer ſent
From th' imitating bird, and was content
To ſhew her play more fully: then in haſte
He tries his lute, and giving her a taſte
Of the enſuing quarrel, nimbly beats
On all his ſtrings: as nimbly ſhe repeats;
And wildly raging o'er a thouſand keys,
Sounds a ſhrill warning of her after-lays:
With rolling hand the lutaniſt then plies
The trembling threads, ſometimes in ſcornful wiſe
He bruſhes down the ſtrings, and ſtrikes them all
With one even ſtroke, then takes them ſeveral,
And culls them o'er again; his ſparkling joints
With buſy diſcant mincing on the points,
Reach back again with nimble touch, then ſtays:
The bird replies, and art with art repays.

Sometimes as one unexpert, and in doubt,
How she might wield her voice, she draweth out
Her tone at large, and doth at first prepare
A solemn strain, nor wear'd with winding air,
But with an equal pitch, and constant throat,
Makes clear the passage for her gliding note;
Then cross division diversly she plays,
And loudly chanting out her quickest lays,
Poises the sound, and, with a quivering voice,
Falls back again. He wond'ring how so choice,
So various harmony could issue out
From such a little throat, doth go about
Some harder lessons, and with wond'rous art,
Changing the strings, doth up the treble dart,
And downward smite the base, with painful stroke
He beats; and as the trumpet doth provoke
Sluggards to fight, ev'n so his wanton skill
With mingled discord joins the hoarse and shrill.
The bird this also tunes; and whilst she cuts
Sharp notes with melting voice, and mingled puts
Measures of middle sound, then suddenly
She thunders deep, and jugs it inwardly
With gentle murmur, clear and dull she sings
By course, as when the martial warning rings.
Believ't the minstrel blusht, with angry mood:
Inflam'd (quoth he) thou chantress of the wood,
Either from thee I'll bear the prize away,
Or vanquish'd, break my lute without delay.
Inimitable accents then he strains,
His hand flies on the strings; in one he chains
Far different numbers, chasing here and there,
And all the strings he labours every where?
Both flat and sharp he strikes, and stately grows
To prouder strains, and backward as he goes
Doubly divides, and closing up his lays
Like a full choir, a shiv'ring consort plays:
Then pausing, stood in expectation
Of his co-rival, nor durst answer on.
But she, when practice long her throat had whet,
Enduring not to yield, at once doth set
Her spirits all to work, and all in vain;
For whilst she labours to express again,
With nature's simple voice, such divers keys,
With slender pipes such lofty notes as these.
O'ermatch'd with high designs o'ermatch'd with woe;
Just at the last encounter of her foe,

She faints, she dies, falls on his instrument
That conquer'd her! a fitting monument,
How far ev'n little souls are driven on,
Struck with a virtuous emulation.

And even as far are hypocrites driven on by their ambition and pride, which is the spur that provokes them in their religious duties.

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## MEDITATION II.

*Upon the Sight of many small Birds chirping about a dead Hawk.*

HEARING a whole choir of birds chirping and twinkling together, it engaged *my* curiosity a little to enquire into the occasion of that convocation, which mine eye quickly informed me of; for I perceived a dead hawk in the bush, about which they made such a noise, seeming to triumph at the death of their enemy; and I could not blame them to sing his knell, who, like a Canibal, was wont to feed upon their living bodies, tearing them limb from limb, and scaring them with his frightful appearance. This bird, which living was so formidable, being dead, the poorest wren or titmouse fears not to chirp, or hop over. This brings to my thoughts the base and ignoble ends of the greatest tyrants, and greedy ingrossers of the world, of whom, (whilst living) men were more afraid, than birds of a hawk, but dead, became objects of contempt and scorn. The death of such tyrants is both inglorious and unlamented; "When the wicked perish, there is shouting," Prov. xi. 10. Which was exemplified to the life, at the death of Nero, of whom the poet thus sings;

*Cum mors crudelem rapuisset sæva Neronem,*
*Credibile est multos Romam agitasse jocos.*

When cruel Nero dy'd, th' historian tells,
How Rome did mourn with bonfires, plays, and bells.

Remarkable for contempt and shame have the ends of many bloody tyrants been. So Pompey the great, of whom Claudian the poet sings,

*Nudus pascit aves, jacetne qui possidet orbem*
*Exiguæ telluris inops———*

Birds eat his flesh. Lo, now he cannot have
Who rul'd the world, a space to make a grave.

The like is storied of Alexander the Great, who lay unburied thirty days; and William the Conqueror, with many other such birds a prey: whilst a beneficial and holy life is usually closed up in an honourable and much lamented death.

For mine own part, I wish I may so order my conversation in the

world, that I may live, when I am dead, in the affections of the best, and leave an honourable testimony in the consciences of the worst; that I may oppress none, do good to all, and say when I die, as good Ambrose did,—I am neither ashamed to live, nor afraid to die.

## MEDITATION III.

*Upon the Sight of a Blackbird taking Sanctuary in a Bush from a pursuing Hawk.*

WHEN I saw how hardly the poor bird was put to it to save herself from her enemy, who hovered just over the bush in which she was fluttering and squeaking, I could not but hasten to relieve her, (pity and succour being a due debt to the distressed;) which, when I had done, the bird would not depart from the bush, though her enemy were gone; this act of kindness was abundantly repaid by this meditation, with which I returned to my walk: my soul, like this bird, was once distressed, pursued, yea, seized by Satan, who had certainly made a prey of it, had not Jesus Christ been a sanctuary to it in that hour of danger. How readily did I find him to receive my poor soul into his protection? Then did he make good that sweet promise to my experience, Those that come unto me I will in no wise cast out. It called to mind that pretty and pertinent story of the philosopher, who walking in the fields, a bird, pursued by a hawk, flew into his bosom; he took her out, and said, 'Poor bird, 'I will neither wrong thee, nor expose thee to thine enemy, since 'thou cameſt to me for refuge.' So tender, and more than so, is the Lord Jesus to distressed souls that come unto him. Blessed Jesus! how should I love and praise thee, glorify and admire thee, for that great salvation thou hast wrought for me? If this bird had fallen into the claws of her enemy, she had been torn to pieces indeed, and devoured, but then a few minutes had dispatched her; and ended all her pain and misery: but had my soul fallen into the hands of Satan, there had been no end of its misery.

Would not this scared bird be flushed out of the bush that secured her, though I had chased away her enemy? And wilt thou, O my soul, ever be enticed or scared from Christ thy refuge? O let this for ever engage thee to keep close to Christ, and make me say, with Ezra, "And now, O Lord, since thou hast given me such a deliver-"ance as this, should I again break thy commandments!"

## MEDITATION IV.

*Upon the sight of divers goldfinches intermingling with a flock of sparrows.*

METHINKS these birds do fitly resemble the gaudy courtiers and the plain peasants; how spruce and richly adorned with

ſhining and various coloured feathers (like ſcarlet, richly laid with gold and ſilver lace) are thoſe? How plainly clad, in a home-ſpun country ruſſet are theſe? *Fine feathers* (ſaith our proverb) *make proud birds*; and yet the feathers of the ſparrow are as uſeful and beneficial, both for warmth and flight, though not ſo gay and ornamental, as the others; and if both were ſtript out of their feathers, the ſparrow would prove the better bird of the two: by which I ſee, that the greateſt worth doth not always lie under the fineſt clothes: And beſides, God can make mean and homely garments as uſeful and beneficial to poor and deſpiſed Chriſtians, as the ruffling and ſhining garments of wanton gallants are to them: and when God ſhall ſtrip men out of all external excellencies, theſe will be found to excel their glittering neighbours in true worth and excellency.

Little would a man think ſuch rich treaſures of grace, wiſdom, humility, *&c.* lay under ſome ruſſet coats.

*Sæpe ſub attrita latitat ſapientia veſte.*

Under poor garments more true worth may be
Than under ſilks that whiſtle, who but he.

Whilſt, on the other ſide, "the heart of the wicked (as Solomon hath "obſerved) is little worth," how much ſoever his clothes be worth. Alas! it falls out too frequently among us, as it doth with men in the Indies, who walk over the rich veins of gold and ore, which lie hid under a ragged and barren ſurface, and know it not. For my own part, I deſire not to value any man by what is extrinſical and worldly, but by that true internal excellency of grace, which makes the face to ſhine in the eyes of God and good men: I would contemn a vile perſon, though never ſo glorious in the eye of the world; but honour ſuch as fear the Lord, how ſordid and deſpicable ſoever to appearance.

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MEDIT. V.

*Upon the ſight of a Robin-red-breaſt picking up a Worm from a mole-hill, then riſing.*

OBSERVING the mole working induſtriouſly beneath, and the bird watching ſo intently above, I made a ſtand to obſerve the iſſue; when in a little time the bird deſcends, and ſeizes upon a Worm, which I perceived was crawling apace from the enemy below that hunted her, but fell to the ſhare of another which from above waited for her. My thoughts preſently ſuggeſted theſe *meditations* from that occaſion: methought this poor worm ſeemed to be the emblem of my poor ſoul, which is more endangered by its own luſts of pride and covetouſneſs, than this worm was by the mole and bird:

my pride, like the aſpiring bird, watches for it above; my covetouſneſs, like the ſubterranean mole, digging for it beneath. Poor ſoul! What a ſad dilemma art thou brought to? If thou go down into the caverns of this earth, there thou art a prey to thy covetouſneſs that hunts thee; and if thou aſpire, or but creep upward, there thy pride waits to enſnare thee. Diſtreſſed ſoul! whither wilt thou go? Aſcend thou mayeſt, not by vain elation, but by a heavenly converſation, beſide which there is no way for thy preſervation; "the way "of life is above to the wiſe," &c.

Again, I could not but obſerve the accidental benefit this poor harmleſs bird obtained by the labour of the mole, who hunting intentionally for herſelf, unburroughed and ferreted out this worm for the bird, who, poſſibly, was hungry enough, and could not have been relieved for this time, but by the mole, the fruit of whoſe labour ſhe now feeds upon. Even thus the Lord oft-times makes good his word to his people: "The wealth of the wicked is laid up for the "juſt." And again, "The earth ſhall help the woman." This was fully exemplified in David, to whom Nabal, that churliſh muckworm, ſpeaks all in poſſeſſives: "Shall I take my bread," &c. "and "give it to one I know not whom?" And yet David reaps the fruits of all the pains and toils of Nabal at laſt. Let it never encourage me to idleneſs, that God ſometimes gives his people the fruit of others ſweat, but if providence reduce me to neceſſity, and diſable me from helping myſelf, I doubt not then, but it will provide inſtruments to do it. The bird was an hungry, and could not dig.

## MEDIT. VI.

*Upon the ſhooting of two Finches fighting in the air.*

HOW ſoon hath death ended the quarrel betwixt theſe two little combatants! had they agreed better, they might have lived longer; it was their own contention that gave both the opportunity and the provocation of their death; and though living they could not, yet, being dead, they can lie quietly together in my hand.

Fooliſh birds, was it not enough that birds of prey watched to devour them, but they muſt peck and ſcratch one another? Thus have I ſeen the birds of paradiſe (ſaints I mean) tearing and wounding each other, like ſo many birds of prey, and by their unchriſtian conteſts giving the occaſion of their common ruin; yea, and that not only when at liberty, as theſe were, but when engaged alſo; and yet, as one well obſerves, if ever Chriſtians will agree, it will either be in a priſon, or in heaven; for in priſon their quarrelſome luſts lie low, and in heaven they ſhall be utterly done away.

But O what pity is it, that thoſe who ſhall agree ſo perfectly in heaven, ſhould bite and devour each other upon earth? That it ſhould be ſaid of them, as one ingeniouſly obſerved, who ſaw their carcaſſes lie

together, as if they had lovingly embraced each other, who fell together by a duel; *Quanta amicitia ſe invicem amplectuntur, qui mutua et implacabili inimicitia perierunt!*

*Embracing one another, now they lie,*
*Who by each other's bloody hands did die.*

Or, as he ſaid, who obſerved how quietly and peaceably the duſt and bones, even of enemies, did lie together in the grave; *Non tanta vivi pace conjuncti eſſetis;* you did not live together ſo peaceably. If conſcience of Chriſt's command will not, yet the conſideration of common ſafety ſhould powerfully perſuade to unity and amity.

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## MEDIT. VII.

### *Upon the ſinging of a blind Finch by night.*

A DEAR friend, who was a great obſerver of the works of God in nature, told me, that being entertained with a ſight of many rarities at a friend's houſe in London; among other things, his friends ſhewed him a *finch*, whoſe eyes being put out, would frequently ſing, even at midnight. This bird, in my opinion, is the lively emblem of ſuch careleſs and unconcerned perſons as the prophet deſcribes, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. who chant to the viol, when a diſmal night of trouble and affliction hath overſhadowed the church. You would have thought it ſtrange to have heard this bird ſing in the night, when all others are in a deep ſilence except the owl, an unclean bird, and the nightingale, which before we made the emblem of the hypocrite. And as ſtrange it is, that any, except the prophane and hypocritical, ſhould ſo unſeaſonably expreſs their mirth and jollity; that any of Sion's children ſhould live in pleaſure, whilſt ſhe herſelf lies in tears. The people of God, in Pſalm cxxxvii. tell us in what poſtures of ſorrow they ſat; even like birds, with their heads under their wings, during the night of their captivity. "How ſhall "we ſing the Lord's ſongs in a ſtrange land?" It is like enough, ſuch as can ſing and chant in the night of the church's trouble, have well feathered their neſts in the days of her proſperity; however, let them know, that God will turn their unſeaſonable mirth into a ſadder note; and thoſe that now ſit ſad and ſilent ſhall ſhortly ſing for joy of heart, when "the winter is paſt, the rain over and gone, the "flowers appear again upon the earth, and the time of the ſinging of "birds is come."

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## MEDIT. VIII.

### *Upon the comparing of two Birds Neſts.*

IT is pretty to obſerve the ſtructure and commodiouſneſs of the habitations of theſe little architects, who, though they act not by

reaſon and counſel, but only by natural inſtinct, yet reaſon itſelf could hardly have contrived a neater building of ſuch ſimple materials. How neatly hath the *thruſh* ceiled or plaſtered his neſt, with admirable art and induſtry! how warmly hath the *finch* matted his? And both well fenced againſt the injury of the weather.

How comfortably hath nature provided convenient habitations for theſe weak and tender young ones, who have warm lodging, and variety of proviſions hourly brought them, without their care or pains? This trifling object ſuggeſts to my thoughts a more excellent and ſerious contemplation, even the wonderful and unparalleled abaſement of Jeſus Chriſt, who for my ſake voluntarily ſubmitted himſelf to a more deſtitute and neglected ſtate, than theſe birds of the air: For Matth. viii. 20. he ſaith, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of "the air have neſts; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his "head."

"The craggy rock to foxes holes afford,
"The pleaſant woods a reſting-place to birds;
"For Chriſt no fixed habitation's found,
"But what was borrow'd, or the naked ground."*

O melting conſideration! that the glorious Son of God, John i. 14. "The Lord of glory," James ii. 1. "The brightneſs of his Fa-"ther's glory," Heb. i. 3. "Who was rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. "and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6. who from *all eternity* was infinitely and ineffably "delighting and rejoicing "in the boſom of his Father," Prov. viii. 30. that he, I ſay, ſhould manifeſt himſelf in fleſh, 2 Tim. iii 16. yea, "in the likeneſs of ſin-"ful fleſh," Rom. viii. 3. that is, in fleſh that had the marks and effects of ſin upon it, as hunger, thirſt, pain, wearineſs, and mortality, and not only ſo, but to chuſe ſuch a ſtate of outward meanneſs and poverty, never being poſſeſſed of a houſe in this world; but living as a ſtranger in other men's houſes, and ſtooping in this reſpect to a lower condition than the very birds of the air, and all this for enemies. O let it work both admiration and thankfulneſs in my ſoul! my body is better accommodated than the body of my Lord. "Dear Je-"ſus! by how much the viler thou madeſt thyſelf for me, by ſo "much the dearer ſhalt thou be to me."†

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MEDIT. IX.

*Upon the early ſinging of Birds.*

HOW am I reproved of ſluggiſhneſs by theſe watchful birds! which cheerfully entertain the very dawning of the morning

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* *Vulpibus in ſaltu rupes exciſa latebras*
*Præbet, et aereis avibus dat ſilva quietem.*
*Aſt hominis Nato nullis ſuccedere tectis*
*Eſt licitum*——— Heinſ. in loc.

† *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior.* Bern.

with their cheerful and delightful warblings! They ſet their little ſpirits all a-work betimes, whilſt my nobler ſpirits are bound with the bonds of ſoft and downy ſlumbers. For ſhame, my ſoul! Suffer not that publican ſleep to ſeize ſo much of thy time, yea, thy beſt and freſheſt time; reprove and chide thy ſluggiſh body, as a good biſhop once did, when, upon the ſame occaſion, he ſaid, *Surrexerunt paſſeres, et ſtertnunt pontifices.*

*The early chirping ſparrows may reprove*
*Such lazy biſhops as their beds do love.*

Of many ſluggards it may be ſaid, as Tully ſaid of Verres, the deputy of Sicily, *Quod nunquam ſolem nec orientem, nec occidentem viderat:* that he never ſaw the ſun riſing, being in bed after, nor ſetting; being in bed before.

It is pity that Chriſtians, of all men, ſhould ſuffer ſleep to cut ſuch large thongs out of ſo narrow a hide as their time on earth is. But alas! it is not ſo much early riſing, as a wiſe improving thoſe freſh and free hours with God that will enrich the ſoul; elſe, as our proverb ſaith, *A man may be early up, and never the nearer;* yea, far better it is to be found in bed ſleeping, than to be up doing nothing, or that which is worſe than nothing. O my ſoul! learn to prepoſſeſs thyſelf every morning with the thoughts of God, and ſuffer not thoſe freſh and ſweet operations of thy mind to be proſtituted to earthly things; for that is experimentally true, which * one, in this caſe, hath pertinently obſerved, that if the world get the ſtart of religion in the morning, it will be hard for religion to overtake it all the day after.

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MEDIT. X.

*Upon the haltering of Birds with a grain of Hair.*

OBSERVING, in a ſnowy ſeaſon, how the poor hungry birds were haltered and drawn in by a grain of hair cunningly caſt over their heads, whilſt, poor creatures, they were buſily feeding, and ſuſpected no danger; and even whilſt their companions were drawn away from them, one after another, all the interruption it gave the reſt was only for a minute or two, whilſt they ſtood peeping into that hole through which their companions were drawn, and then fell to their meat again as buſily as before; I could not chuſe but ſay, "Even thus ſurpriſingly doth death ſteal upon the children of men, 'whilſt they are wholly intent upon the cares and pleaſures of this 'life, not at all ſuſpecting its ſo near approach.' Theſe birds ſaw not the hand that enſnared them, nor do they ſee the hand of death plucking them one after enother into the grave.

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* Mr Caſe, in Epiſt. to the Morn. Lect.

" Death's ſteps as ſwift, and yet no noiſe it makes;
" Its hand unſeen, but yet moſt ſurely takes *."

And even as the ſurviving birds for a little time ſeemed to ſtand affrighted, peeping after their companions, and then as buſy as ever to their meat again; juſt ſo it fares with the careleſs, inconſiderate world, who ſee others daily dropping into eternity round about them, and for the preſent are a little ſtartled, and will look into the grave after their neighbours, and then fall as buſily to their earthly employments and pleaſures again, as ever, till their own turn comes.

I know, my God, that I muſt die as well as others; but O let me not die as others do, let me ſee death before I feel it, and conquer it before it kill me; let it not come as an enemy upon my back, but rather let me meet it as a friend, half way. Die I muſt, but let me lay up that good treaſure before I go, Matth. vi. 19. Carry with me a good conſcience when I go, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. and leave behind me a good example when I am gone, and then let death come, and welcome.

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## MEDITATIONS upon BEASTS.

### MEDIT. I.

*Upon the clogging of a ſtraying beaſt.*

HAD this bullock contented himſelf, and remained quietly within his own bounds, his owner had never put ſuch an heavy clog upon his neck; but I ſee the prudent huſbandman chuſes rather to keep him with this clog, than loſe him for want of one. What this clog is to him, that is affliction and trouble to me; had my ſoul kept cloſe with God in liberty and proſperity, he would never thus have clogged me with adverſity; yea, and happy were it for me, if I might ſtray from God no more, who hath thus clogged me with preventive afflictions. If, with David I might ſay, " Before I was " afflicted I went aſtray, but now I have kept thy word," Pſalm cxix. 67. O my ſoul! it is better for thee to have thy pride clogged with poverty, thy ambition with reproach, thy carnal expectancies with conſtant diſappointments, than to be at liberty to run from God and duty.

It is true, I am ſometimes as weary of theſe troubles, as this poor beaſt is of the clog he draws after him, and often wiſh myſelf rid of them; but yet, if God ſhould take them off, for ought I know, I might have cauſe to wiſh them on again, to prevent a greater miſchief. It is ſtoried of Baſil, that for many years he was ſorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ach, (that was his clog) he often prayed for

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* *Omnibus obſcuras injecit illa manus.* Ovid.

the removal of it; at laſt God removed it, but inſtead thereof he was ſorely exerciſed with the motions and temptations of luſt, which when he perceived, he as earneſtly deſired his head-ach again, to prevent a greater evil. Lord! if my corruptions may be prevented by my afflictions, I refuſe not to be clogged with them; but my ſoul rather deſires thou wouldſt haſten the time when I ſhall be for ever freed from them both.

## MEDIT. II.

### *Upon the love of a Dog to his Maſter.*

HOW many a weary ſtep, through mire and dirt, hath this poor dog followed my horſe's heels to day, and all this for a very poor reward? for all he gets by it at night, is but bones and blows, yet will he not leave my company, but is content upon ſuch hard terms, to travel with me from day to day.

O my ſoul! what conviction and ſhame may this leave upon thee, who art oftentimes even weary of following thy maſter, Chriſt, whoſe rewards and encouragements of obedience are ſo incomparably ſweet and ſure! I cannot beat back this dog from following me, but every inconſiderable trouble is enough to diſcourage me in the way of my duty. Ready I am to reſolve as that ſcribe did, Matth. viii. 19. "Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt;" but how doth my heart faulter, when I muſt encounter with the difficulties of the way? Oh! let me make a whole heart-choice of Chriſt for my portion and happineſs! and then I ſhall never leave him, nor turn back from following him, though the preſent difficulties were much more, and the preſent encouragements much leſs.

## MEDIT. III.

### *Upon the fighting of two Rams.*

TAKING notice how furiouſly theſe ſheep, which by nature are mild and gentle, did yet, like bulls, puſh each other, taking their advantage by going back to meet with a greater rage and fury: methought I ſaw in this a plain emblem of the unchriſtian conteſts and animoſities which fall out amongſt them that call themſelves the people of God, who are in ſcripture alſo ſtiled ſheep, for their meekneſs and innocency; and yet, through the remaining corruptions that are in them, thus do they do puſh each other; as one long ſince complained,

——— *non ſecus ac*
*Cum duo converſis inimica in prælia tauri,*
*Frontibus incurrunt* ———

Shall Chriſtians one another wound and puſh,
Like furious bulls, when they together ruſh?

The fighting of theſe ſheep doth in two reſpects notably comport with the ſinful practices of contending Chriſtians, 1. That in this fight they engage with their heads one againſt another: and what are they but thoſe head-notions, or *oppoſition of ſciences*, falſly ſo called, that have made ſo many broils and uproars in the Chriſtian world? O! what claſhings have theſe heady opinions cauſed in the churches! Firſt heads, and then hearts have claſhed. Chriſtians have not diſtinguiſhed betwixt *adverſarius litis, et perſonæ;* an adverſary to the *opinion*, and to the *perſon*; but dipt their tongues and pens in vinegar and gall, ſhamefully aſperſing and reproaching one another, becauſe their underſtandings were not caſt into one mould, and their heads all of a bigneſs. But, 2. That which country-men obſerve from the fighting of ſheep, *That it preſages foul and ſtormy weather*, is much more certainly conſequent upon the fighting of Chriſt's ſheep. Do theſe claſh and puſh? Surely *it is an infallible prognoſtic of an enſuing ſtorm*, Mal. iv. 6.

## MEDIT. IV.

### *Upon the Catching of an Horſe in a fat Paſture.*

WHEN this horſe was kept in poor ſhort leas, where he had much ſcope, but little graſs, how gentle and tractable was he then? He would not only ſtand quiet to be taken, but come to hand of his own accord, and follow me up and down the field for a cruſt of bread, or handful of oats; but ſince I turned him into this fat paſture, he comes no more to me, nor will ſuffer me to come near him, but throws up his heels wantonly againſt me, and flies from me as if I were rather his enemy than a benefactor. In this I behold the carriage of my own heart towards God, who the more he hath done for me, the ſeldomer doth he hear from me; in a low and afflicted ſtate, how tractable is my heart to duty? Then it comes to the foot of God voluntarily. But in an exalted condition, how wildly doth my heart run from God and duty? With this ungrateful requital God faulted his own people, Jer. iii. 31. teachable and tractable in the wilderneſs, but when fatted in that rich paſture of Canaan, "Then we are lords, we will come no more to thee." How ſoon are all God's former benefits forgotten? And how often is that ancient obſervation * verified, even in his own people?

"No ſooner do we gifts on ſome beſtow,
"But preſently our gifts grey-headed grow."

* Μετα την δοσιν ταχισα γηρασκει χαρις.
*Poſt munera cito conſeneſcit gratia.*

But that is a bad tenant, that will maintain a ſuit at law againſt his landlord with his own rent; and a bad heart, that will fight againſt God with his own mercies. I wiſh it may be with my heart, as it is reported to be with the waters in the kingdom of Congo, that are never ſo ſweet to the taſte, as when the tide is at the higheſt.

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MEDIT. V.

*Upon the hunting of a Deer.*

THE full-mouthed cry of theſe dogs, which from the morning have hunted this poor tired deer, which is now no longer able to ſtand before them, but is compaſſed round with them, who thirſt for, and will preſently ſuck her blood, brings to my thoughts the condition and ſtate of Jeſus Chriſt, in the days of his fleſh, who was thus hunted from place to place by blood-thirſty enemies. Upon this very account, the 22d Pſalm, which treats of his death, is inſcribed with the title of *Ajieleth Shahar*, which ſignifies the *hind of the morning*, and fully imports the ſame notion which this occaſion preſented me with; for look, as the *hind* or *deer*, which is intended to be run down that day, is rouzed by the dogs early in the morning, ſo was Chriſt, in the very morning of his infancy, by bloody Herod, and that cruel pack confederated with him. Thus was he chaſed from place to place, till that was fulfilled which was prophetically written of him in ver. 16. of the forecited Pſalm: "For dogs have compaſſed me about, the "aſſembly of the wicked have incloſed me; they pierced my hands "and my feet."

And canſt thou expect, O my ſoul! to fare better than he did, or eſcape the rage of bloody men? Surely, if the Spirit of Chriſt dwell in thee, if his holineſs have favoured thee, theſe dogs will wind it, and give thee chaſe too: they go upon the ſcent of holineſs ſtill, and would hunt to deſtruction every one, in whom there is *aliquid Chriſti*, any thing of Chriſt, if the gracious providence of the Lord did not ſometimes rate them off: for it is no leſs a pleaſure which ſome wicked ones take in hunting the people of God, than what * Claudian the poet obſerves men uſe to take in hunting wild beaſts.

"Whilſt every huntſmen in the night do ſleep,
"Their fancies in the woods ſtill hunting keep."

Lord! ſhould I with the hypocrite decline the profeſſion and practice of holineſs, to eſcape the rage of perſecuting enemies, at what time they ceaſe, my own conſcience would begin to hunt me like a blood-hound; let me rather chuſe to be chaſed by men than God, to flee



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* *Venator defeſſa thero quum membra reponit,*
*Mens tamen ad ſylvas, et ſua luſtra redit* Claud.

before purſuing enemies, than be dogged from day to day with a gullty conſcience.

## MEDITATIONS upon TREES.

### MEDIT. I.

*Upon the fall of Bloſſoms, nipt by a froſty morning.*

BEHOLDING in an early ſpring, fruit-trees emboſſed with beautiful bloſſoms of various colours, which breathed forth their delicious odours into the circumambient air, and adorned the branches on which they grew, like ſo many rich jewels, or glittering pendents; and further obſerving, how theſe perfumed bloſſoms dropt off, being bitten with the froſt, and diſcoloured all the ground, as if a ſhower of ſnow had fallen; I ſaid within myſelf, theſe ſweet and early bloſſoms are not unlike my ſweet and early affections to the Lord in the days of my firſt acquaintance with him. O what fervent love, panting deſires, and heavenly delights beautified my ſoul in thoſe days! The odoriferous ſcent of the ſweeteſt bloſſoms, the morning breath of the moſt fragrant flowers, hath not half that ſweetneſs with which thoſe my firſt affections were enriched. O! happy time, thrice pleaſant ſpring! My ſoul hath it ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled within me; for theſe alſo were but bloſſoms which now are nipt and faded, that firſt flouriſh is gone; my heart is like the winter's earth, becauſe thy face, Lord, is to me like a winter ſun. "Awake, O north wind! "and come, ſouth wind, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices there- "of may flow out, then let my beloved come into his garden, and "eat his pleaſant fruit!"

### MEDIT. II.

*Upon the knitting, or ſetting of Fruit.*

I HAVE often obſerved, that when the bloſſoms of a tree ſet and knit, though the flouriſh thereof be gone, and nothing but the bare rudiment of the expected fruit be left; yet then the fruit is much better ſecured from the danger of froſts and winds, than whilſt it remained in the flower or bloſſom; for now it hath paſt one of thoſe *critical periods*, in which ſo many trees miſcarry and loſe their fruit. And methought this *natural obſervation* fairly led me to this *theological propoſition*, 'That good motions, and holy purpoſes in the ſoul, are 'never ſecured, and paſt their moſt dangerous *criſis*, till they be turn- 'ed into fixed reſolutions, and anſwerable executions, which is as 'the knitting and ſetting of them.'

Upon this propoſition my melting thoughts thus dilated: happy had it been for thee, my ſoul! had all the bleſſed motions of the Spi-

rit been thus knit and fixed in thee. Oh, how have mine affections blown and budded under the warm beams of the goſpel! But a chill blaſt from the cares, troubles, and delights of the world without, and the vanity and deadneſs of the heart within, have blaſted all; my goodneſs hath been but as a morning-due, or early cloud, that vaniſheth away. And even of divine ordinances, I may ſay what is ſaid of human ordinances, "They have periſhed in the uſing." A bloſſom is but *fructus imperfectus, et ordinabilis*, an imperfect thing in itſelf, and ſomething in order to fruit: a good motion and holy purpoſe is but *opus imperfectum, et ordinabile*, an imperfect work, in order to a complete work of the Spirit; when that *primus impetus*, thoſe firſt motions were ſtrong upon my heart, had I then purſued them in the force and vigour of them, how many difficulties might I have overcome? Revive thy work, O Lord, and give not to my ſoul a miſcarring womb, or dry breaſts.

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### MEDIT. III.

*Upon the ſight of a fair ſpreading Oak.*

WHAT a lofty flouriſhing tree is here? It ſeems rather to be a little wood, than a ſingle tree, every limb thereof having the dimenſions and branches of a tree in it; and yet as great as it is, it was once but a little ſlip, which one might pull up with two fingers; this vaſt body was contained virtually and potentially in a ſmall acorn. Well then, I will never deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, nor deſpair of arriving to an eminency of grace, though at preſent it be but as a bruiſed reed, and the things that are in me be ready to die. As things in nature, ſo the things of the Spirit, grow up to their fulneſs and perfection by ſlow and inſenſible degrees. The famous and heroical acts of the moſt renowned believers were ſuch as themſelves could not once perform, or it may be think they ever ſhould. Great things, both in nature and grace, come from ſmall and contemptible beginnings.

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### MEDIT. IV.

*Upon the ſight of many ſticks lodged in the branches of a choice Fruit-tree.*

HOW is this tree battered with ſtones, and loaded with ſticks, that have been thrown at it, whilſt thoſe that grow about it, being barren, or bearing harſher fruit, eſcape untouched! Surely if its fruit had not been ſo good, its uſage had not been ſo bad. And yet it is affirmed, that ſome trees, as the walnut &c. bear the better for being thus bruiſed and battered.

Even thus it fares in both reſpects with the beſt of men; the more holy, the more envied and perſecuted; every one that paſſes by will have a fling at them. Methinks I ſee how devils and wicked men walk round about the people of God, whom he hath incloſed in his arms of power, like ſo many boys about an orchard, whoſe lips water to have a fling at them. But God turns all the ſtones of reproach into precious ſtones to his people; they bear the better for being thus battered. And in them is that ancient *obſervation verified.

" The palms and crowns of virtue thus increaſe;
" Thus perſecution's turned into peace."

Let me but be fruitful to God in holineſs, and ever abounding in the work of the Lord, and then whilſt devils and men are flinging at me, either by hand or tongue perſecutions, I will ſing amidſt them all with the divine poet:

" What open force, or hidden charm,
" Can blaſt my fruits, or bring me harm,
" Whilſt the incloſure is thine arm?"

Herb. Poem, p. 125.

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MEDIT. V.

*Upon the gathering of choice fruit from a ſcrubbed, unpromiſing Tree.*

WOULD any man think to find ſuch rare delicious fruit upon ſuch an unworthy tree to appearance as this is? I ſhould rather have expected the moſt delicious fruit from the moſt handſome and flouriſhing trees; but I ſee I muſt neither judge the worth of trees or men by their external form and appearance. This is not the firſt time I have been deceived in judging by that rule; under fair and promiſing outſides I have found nothing of worth; and in many deformed, deſpicable bodies, I have found precious and richly furniſhed ſouls. The ſap and juice of this ſcrubbed tree is concocted into rare and excellent fruits, whilſt the juice and ſap of ſome other fair, but barren trees, ſerve only to keep them from rotting, which is all the uſe that many ſouls which dwell in beautiful bodies ſerve for; they have, as one ſaith, *animam pro ſale*; their ſouls are but ſalt to their bodies. Or thus,

The only uſe to which their ſouls do ſerve,
Is but like ſalt, their bodies to preſerve.

If God have given me a ſound ſoul in a ſound body, I have a double *mercy* to bliſs him for; but whether my body be vigorous and

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* *Creſcunt virtutum palmæ, creſcuntque coronæ*
*Mutantur mundi prælia, pace Dei.*

beautiful, or not, yet let my ſoul be ſo: for as the eſteem of this tree, ſo the eſteem and true honour of every man, riſe rather from his fruitfulneſs and uſefulneſs, than from his ſhape and form.

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### MEDIT. VI.

*Upon an excellent, but irregular Tree.*

SEEING a tree grow ſomewhat irregular, in a very neat orchard, I told the owner it was pity that tree ſhould ſtand there; and that if it were mine I would root it up, and thereby reduce the orchard to an exact uniformity. It was replied to this purpoſe, 'That he rather regarded the fruit than the form;' and that this ſlight inconveniency was abundantly preponderated by a more conſiderable advantage. This tree, *ſaid he*, which you would root up, hath yielded me more fruit than many of thoſe trees which have nothing elſe to commend them but their regular ſituation. I could not but yield to the reaſon of this anſwer; and could wiſh it had been ſpoken ſo loud, that all our uniformity-men had heard it, who will not ſtick to root up many hundred of the beſt bearers in the Lord's orchard, becauſe they ſtand not in an exact order with other more conformable, but leſs beneficial trees, who *perdunt ſubſtantiam propter accidentia*, deſtroy the fruit to preſerve the form.

Not much unlike, ſuch fooliſh men are thoſe,
That ſtrive for ſhadows, and the ſubſtance loſe.

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## MEDITATIONS upon a GARDEN.

### MEDIT. I.

*Upon the new-modelling of a Garden.*

A Gentlewoman who had lately ſeen a neat and curious garden, returns to her own with a greater diſlike of it than ever; reſolves to new-model the whole plat, and reduce it to a better form. She is now become ſo curious and neat, that not a weed or ſtone is ſuffered in it, but all muſt lie in exquiſite order; and whatever ornament ſhe had obſerved in her neighbour's, ſhe is now reſtleſs till ſhe ſees it in her own.

Happy were it, thought I, if in an holy emulation every one would thus endeavour to rectify the diſorders of their own converſation, by the excellent graces they behold in the more heavenly and regular lives of others. Some Chriſtians there are (I wiſh their number were greater) whoſe actions lie in ſuch a comely and beautiful order, that few of their neighbours can look upon their examples without

ſelf-conviction and ſhame; but few are ſo happy to be provoked into ſelf-reformation by ſuch rare patterns. I ſee it is much eaſier to pull up many weeds out of a garden, than one corruption out of the heart; and to procure an hundred flowers to adorn a knot, than one grace to beautify the ſoul. It is more natural to corrupt man to envy, than to imitate the ſpiritual excellencies of others.

## MEDIT. II.

### *Upon the pulling up of a Leek.*

A White head and a green tail! How well doth this reſemble an old wanton lover, whoſe green youthful luſts are not extinguiſhed, though his white head declares that nature is almoſt ſo! Gray hairs ſhould be always matched with grave deportments; and the ſins of youth ſhould rather be the griefs than pleaſures of old age. It is ſad when the ſins of the ſoul, like the diſeaſes of the body, grow ſtronger, as nature grows weaker: and it recals to my mind that ancient obſervation of * Menander:

" It is the worſt of evils, to behold
" Strong youthful luſts to rage in one that's old."

It is a thouſand pities, that thoſe who have one foot in the grave, ſhould live as if the other were in hell! that their luſts ſhould be ſo lively, when their bodies are three parts dead! Such ſinful practices bring upon them more contempt and ſhame, than their hoary heads, and reverend faces can procure them honour.

" Gray hairs, and aged wrinkles, did of old
" Procure more reverence than bags of gold †."

But alas! how little reſpect or reverence can the hoary head obtain amongſt wiſe men, except it be found in the way of righteouſneſs? I think the loweſt eſteem is too much for an old ſervant of the devil; and the higheſt honour little enough for an ancient and faithful ſervant of Chriſt.

## MEDIT. III.

### *Upon a heedleſs tread in a curious Garden.*

PASSING through the ſmall diviſions of a curious knot, which was richly adorned with rare tulips, and other beautiful flowers;

* Γερων ερασης εσχατη κακη τοκη·
*Senex amore captus, ultimum malum.* Menand.

† *Magna fuit capitis quondam reverentia cani,*
*Inque ſuo pretio ruga ſenilis erat.* Ovid. 5 Faſt.

I was very careful to ſhun thoſe flowers, which indeed had no other worth to commend them, but their exquiſite colour; and unadviſedly trode upon and ſpoiled an excellent choice herb, which, though it grew obſcurely, yet had rare phyſical virtues in it.

When I was made ſenſible of the involuntary treſpaſs I had committed, I thought I could ſcarcely make the owner a better compenſation, than by telling him, that herein (though againſt my will) I did but tread in the footſteps of the greateſt part of the world, who are very careful (as I was) to keep their due diſtance from ſplendid, though worthleſs gallants, mean while trampling upon, and cruſhing under foot the obſcure, but moſt precious ſervants of God in the world. As little do they heed theſe moſt excellent perſons, as I did this precious herb.

*Summa ingenia in occulto ſæpe latent*, ſaith Plautus.

Rare wits, and herbs, ſometimes do ſculk and ſhrink
In ſuch blind holes, as one would little think.

For my own part I deſire to tread upon no man with the foot of contempt and pride, much leſs upon any good man; and that I may not, it concerns me to look before I ſtep; I mean, to conſider before I cenſure: had I done ſo by this rare herb, I had never hurt it.

## MEDIT. IV.

### *Upon a withsred Poſy taken up in the way.*

FINDING in my walk, a poſy of once ſweet and fragrant, but now dry and withered flowers, which I ſuppoſe to be thrown away by one that had formerly worn it: thus, ſaid I, doth the unfaithful world uſe its friends, when providence hath blaſted and withered them; whilſt they are rich and honourable, they will put them into their boſoms, as the owner of this poſy did, whilſt it was freſh and fragrant, and as eaſily throw them away as uſeleſs and worthleſs things, when thus they come to be withered. Such uſage as this * Petronius long ſince complained of.

"Are they in honour? Then we ſmile like friends;
"And with their fortunes all our friendſhip ends."

But this looſe and deceitful friend ſtinks ſo odiouſly in the very noſtrils of nature, that a † *heathen poet* ſeverely taxes and condemns it as moſt unworthy of a man.

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* *Cum fortuna manet vultum ſervatis amici,*
*Cum cecidit turpi vertitis ora fuga.* Petronius.

† *Turpe ſequi caſum, et fortunæ cedere, amicum*
*Et niſi ſit fælix eſſe negare ſuum.*

" 'Tis baſe to change with fortune, and deny
" A faithful friend, becauſe in poverty."

And is this indeed the friendſhip of the world? Doth it thus uſe them whom once it honoured? Then, Lord! Let me never ſeek its friendſhip. O let me eſteem the ſmiles and honours of men leſs, and thy love and favour more! thy love is indeed unchangeable, being pure, free, and built upon nothing that is mutable; thou never ſerveſt thy friends as the world doth its darlings.

## MEDIT. V.

### *Upon the ſudden withering of a Roſe.*

BEING with my friend in a garden, we gathered each of us a roſe; he handled his tenderly, ſmelled to it but ſeldom, and ſparingly; I always kept it to my noſe, or ſqueezed it in my hand, whereby in a very ſhort time it loſt both its colour and ſweetneſs, but his ſtill remained as ſweet and fragrant as if it had been growing upon its own root. Theſe roſes, ſaid I, are the true emblems of the beſt and ſweeteſt creature-enjoyments in the world, which, being moderately and cautiouſly uſed and enjoyed, may for a long time yield ſweetneſs to the poſſeſſor of them; but if once the affection ſeize too greedily upon them, and ſqueeze them too hard, they quickly wither in our hands, and we loſe the comfort of them, and that either through the ſoul's ſurfeiting upon them, or the Lord's righteous and juſt removal of them, becauſe of the exceſs of our affections to them; earthly comforts, like pictures, ſhew beſt at a due diſtance. It was therefore a good ſaying of * Homer, Ανδρι ξειοδοκω, &c.

" I like him not, who at the rate
" Of all his might doth love or hate."

It is a point of excellent wiſdom to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon all the affections we exerciſe upon earthly things, and never to ſlip thoſe reins, unleſs when they move towards God, in whoſe love there is no danger of exceſs.

## MEDIT. VI.

### *Upon the ſudden withering of beautiful Flowers.*

HOW freſh and orient did theſe flowers lately appear, when being daſhed over with the morning dew, they ſtood in all their pride and glory, breathing out their delicious odours, which perfu-

* *Mihi nunquam is placet hoſpes*
*Qui valde præterque modum odii vel amat.* Homer.

med the air round about them, but now are withered and ſhrivelled up, and have neither any deſirable beauty or favour in them.

So vain a thing is the admired beauty of creatures, which ſo captivates the hearts, and exerciſes a pleaſing tyranny over the affections of vain man, yet it is as ſuddenly blaſted as the beauty of a flower*.

" How frail is beauty in how ſhort a time
" It fades, like roſes, which have paſt their prime.
" So wrinkled age the faireſt face will plow,
" And caſt deep furrows on the ſmootheſt brow.
" Then where's that lovely tempting face? Alas!
" Yourſelves would bluſh to view it in a glaſs."

If then thou delighteſt in beauty, O my ſoul! chuſe that which is laſting. There is a beauty which never fades, even the beauty of holineſs upon the inner man; this abides freſh and orient for ever, and ſparkles glorioufly, when thy face (the ſeat of natural beauty) is become an abhorrent and loathſome ſpectacle. Holineſs enamels and ſprinkles over the face of the ſoul with a beauty, upon which Chriſt himſelf is enamoured; even imperfect holineſs on earth is a roſe that breathes ſweetly in the bud; in heaven it will be full-blown, and abide in its prime to all eternity.

## MEDIT. VII.

### *Upon the tenderneſs of ſome choice Flowers.*

HOW much care is neceſſary to preſerve the life of ſome flowers! they muſt be boxed up in the winter, others muſt be covered with glaſſes in their ſpringing up, the fineſt and richeſt mould muſt be ſifted about the roots, and aſſiduouſly watered, and all this little enough, and ſometimes too little to preſerve them; whilſt other common and worthleſs flowers grow without any help of ours: Yea, we have no leſs to do to rid our gardens of them, than we have to make the former grow there.

Thus ſtands the caſe with our hearts, in reference to the motions of grace and ſin. Holy thoughts of God muſt be aſſiduouſly watered by prayer, earthed up by meditation, and defended by watchfulneſs; and yet all this is ſometimes too little to preſerve them alive in our ſouls. Alas! the heart is a ſoil that agrees not with them, they



* *Forma bonum fragile eſt, quantumque accedit ad annos,*
*Fit minor, et ſpatio carpitur ipſa ſuo.*
*Nec ſemper violæ, nec ſemper lilia florent,*
*Et riget amiſſa ſpina relicta roſa*
*Tempus erit quo vos ſpeculum vidiſſe pigebit,*
*Jam veniunt ruſæ quæ tibi corpus arent, &c.* Ovid, *de Art.*

are tender things, and a ſmall matter will nip and kill them. To this purpoſe is the complaint of the divine Poet:—

Who would have thought a joy
ſo coy
To be offended ſo,
and go
So ſuddenly away?
Hereafter I had need
take heed.
Joys among other things
have wings,
And watch their opportunities of flight,
Converting, in a moment, day to night.

*Herbert.*

But vain thoughts, and unholy ſuggeſtions, theſe ſpread themſelves and root deep in the heart; they naturally agree with the ſoil: So that it is almoſt impoſſible, at any time, to be rid of them. It is hard to forget what is our ſin to remember.

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MEDIT. VIII.

*Upon the ſtrange means of preſerving the life of Vegetables.*

I OBSERVE that plants and herbs are ſometimes killed by froſts, and yet without froſts they would neither live nor thrive: They are ſometimes drowned with water, and yet without water they cannot ſubſiſt: They are refreſhed and cheered by the heat of the ſun, and yet that ſun ſometimes kills and ſcorches them up. Thus lives my ſoul: Troubles and afflictions ſeem to kill all its comforts; and yet without theſe, its comforts could not live. The ſun-blaſts of proſperity ſometimes refreſh me, and yet thoſe ſun-blaſts are the likelieſt way to wither me: By what ſeeming contradictions is the life of my ſpirit preſerved! what a myſtery, what a paradox is the life of a Chriſtian?

Welcome my health, this ſickneſs makes me well.
Med'cines adieu.
When with diſeaſes I have liſt to dwell,
I'll wiſh for you.
Welcome, my ſtrength, this weakneſs makes me able.
Powers adieu.
When I am weary grown of ſtanding ſtable,
I'll wiſh for you.
Welcome, my wealth, this loſs hath gain'd me more,
Riches adieu.

When I again grow greedy to be poor,
I'll wiſh for you.
Welcome, my credit, this diſgrace is glory.
Honours adieu.
When for renown and fame I ſhall be ſorry,
I'll wiſh for you.
Welcome content, this ſorrow is my joy.
Pleaſures adieu.
When I deſire ſuch griefs as may annoy,
I'll wiſh for you.
Health, ſtrength, and riches, credit, and content,
Are ſpared beſt ſometimes when they are ſpent.
Sickneſs and weakneſs, loſs, diſgrace, and ſorrow,
Lend moſt ſometimes, when moſt they ſeem to borrow.

And if by theſe contrary and improbable ways the Lord preſerves our ſouls in life, no marvel then we find ſuch ſtrange and ſeemingly contradictory motions of our hearts, under the various dealings of God with us, and are ſtill reſtleſs, in what condition ſoever he puts us; which reſtleſs frame was excellently expreſſed in that pious epigram of the reverend Gataker, made a little before his death.

I thirſt for thirſtineſs, I weep for tears,
Well pleas'd I am to be diſpleaſed thus:
The only thing I fear, is want of fears,
Suſpecting I am not ſuſpicious.
I cannot chuſe but live, becauſe I die;
And when I am not dead, how glad am I?
Yet when I am thus glad for ſenſe of pain,
And careful am leſt I ſhould careleſs be;
Then do I grieve for being glad again,
And fear, leſt carefulneſs take care for me.
Amidſt theſe reſtleſs thoughts this reſt I find,
For thoſe that reſt not here, there's reſt behind.
*Jam tetigi portum, valete.*

# NAVIGATION

## *SPIRITUALIZED:*

OR,

## A NEW COMPASS FOR SEAMEN,

*CONSISTING OF* 32 *POINTS,*

Of pleaſant *Obſervations*, profitable *Applications*, and ſe-rious *Reflections:*

All concluded with ſo many ſpiritual POEMS.

What good might Seamen get, if once they were
But heavenly-minded, if they could but ſteer
The Chriſtian's courſe, the ſoul might then enjoy
Sweet peace, they might like ſeas o'erflow with joy.
Were God our all, how would our comforts double
Upon us! thus the ſeas of all our trouble
Would be divinely ſweet: men ſhould endeavour
To ſee God now, and be with him for ever

*To all Maſters, Mariners, and Seamen; eſpecially ſuch as belong to the Borough of Clifton, Dartmouth, and Hardneſs, in the county of Devon.*

SIRS,

I FIND it ſtoried of Anacharſis, that when one aſked him whether the living or the dead were more? He returned this anſwer, 'You muſt firſt tell me (ſaith he) in which number I muſt place 'ſeamen:' Intimating thereby, that ſeamen are, as it were, a third ſort of perſons, to be numbered neither with the living nor the dead; their lives hanging continually in ſuſpenſe before them. And it was anciently accounted the moſt deſperate employment, and they little better than loſt men that uſed the ſeas. 'Through all my life (ſaith 'Ariſtotle) three things do eſpecially repent me: 1. That ever I 'revealed a ſecret to a woman. 2. That ever I remained one day 'without a will. 3. That ever I went to any place by ſea, whither 'I might have gone by land.' 'Nothing (ſaith another) is more 'miſerable, than to ſee a virtuous and worthy perſon upon the ſea.' And although cuſtom, and the great improvement of the art of navigation, have made it leſs formidable now, yet are you no further from death than you are from the waters, which is but a remove of two or three inches. Now you that border ſo high upon the confines of death and eternity every moment, may be well ſuppoſed to be men

of ſingular piety and ſeriouſneſs: For nothing more compoſes the heart to ſuch a frame, than the lively apprehenſions of eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than you have. But, alas! for the generality, what ſort of men are more ungodly, and ſtupidly inſenſible of eternal concernments? living, for the moſt part, as if they had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at agreement. It was an ancient ſaying, *Qui neſcit orare, diſcat navigare*, He that knows not how to pray, let him go to ſea. But we may ſay now, (alas! that we may ſay ſo in times of greater light) he that would learn to be profane, to drink and ſwear, and diſhonour God, let him go to ſea. As for prayer, it is a rare thing among ſeamen, they count that a needleſs buſineſs: they ſee the profane and vile delivered as well as others; and therefore, what profit is there if they pray unto him? Mal. iii. 4. As I remember, I have read of a profane ſoldier, who was heard ſwearing, though he ſtood in a place of great danger; and when one that ſtood by him warned him, ſaying, 'Fellow-ſoldier, do not ſwear, the bullets fly:' he anſwered, 'They that ſwear come off as well as they that pray.' Soon after a ſhot hit him, and down he fell. Plato diligently admoniſhed all men to avoid the ſea; 'For (ſaith he) it is the ſchoolmaſter of all vice and 'diſhoneſty.' Sirs! it is a very ſad conſideration to me, that you who float upon the great deeps, in whoſe bottom ſo many thouſand poor miſerable creatures lie, whoſe ſins have ſunk them down, not only into the bottom of the ſea, but of hell alſo, whither divine vengeance hath purſued them: That you, I ſay, who daily float, and hover over them, and have the roaring waves and billows that ſwallowed them up, gaping for you as the next prey, ſhould be no more affected with theſe things. Oh what a terrible voice doth God utter in the ſtorms! "It breaks the cedars, ſhakes the wilderneſs, makes the hinds to "calve," Pſal. xxix. 5. And can it not ſhake your hearts? This voice of the Lord is full of majeſty, but his voice in the word is more efficacious and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. to convince and rip up the heart. This word is exalted above all his name, Pſalm cxxxviii. 3. and if it cannot awaken you, it is no wonder you remain ſecure and dead, when the Lord utters his voice in the moſt dreadful ſtorms and tempeſts. But if neither the voice of God uttered in his dreadful works, or in his glorious goſpel, can effectually awaken and rouze, there is an Euroclydon, a fearful ſtorm coming, which will ſo awaken your ſouls, as that they ſhall never ſleep any more, Pſal. xi. 6. "Upon "the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an horrible "tempeſt: This is the portion of their cup." You that have been at ſea in the moſt violont ſtorms, never felt ſuch a ſtorm as this, and the Lord grant you never may; no calm ſhall follow this ſtorm. There are ſome among you, that, I am perſuaded, do truly fear that God in whoſe hand their life and breath are; men that fear an oath, and are an honour to their profeſſion; who drive a trade for heaven, and are diligent to ſecure the happineſs of their immortal ſouls, in the

inſurance-office above; but for the generality, alas! they mind none of theſe things. How many of you are coaſting to and fro, from one country to another? But never think of that *heavenly* country above, nor how you may get the merchandize thereof, which is better than the gold of Ophir. How oft do you tremble to ſee the foaming waves dance about you, and waſh over you? You conſider not how terrible it will be to have all the waves and billows of God's wrath to go over your ſouls, and that for ever. How glad are you after you have been long toſſed upon the ocean, to deſcry land? And how yare and eagerly do you look out for it, who yet never had your hearts warmed with the conſideration of that joy which ſhall be among the *ſaints*, when they arrive at the *heavenly ſtrand*, and ſet foot upon the ſhore of glory.

O Sirs! I beg of you, if you have any regard to thoſe precious, immortal ſouls of yours, which are alſo imbarked for *eternity*, whither all winds blow them, and will quickly be at their port of heaven or hell, that you will ſeriouſly mind theſe things, and learn to ſteer your courſe to heaven, and improve all winds (I mean opportunities and means) to waft you thither.

Here you venture life and liberty, run through many difficulties and dangers, and all to compaſs a periſhing treaſure; yet how often do you return diſappointed in your deſign? Or if not, yet it is but a fading ſhort-lived inheritance, which like the flowing tide, for a while, covers the ſhore, and then returns, and leaves it naked and dry again: and are not everlaſting treaſures worth venturing for? Good ſouls be wiſe for eternity: I here preſent you with the fruit of a few ſpare hours, redeemed for your ſakes, from my other ſtudies and employments, which I have put into a new dreſs and mode. I have endeavoured to clothe ſpiritual matters in your own dialect and phraſes, that they might be the more intelligible to you; and added ſome pious poems, with which the ſeveral chapters are concluded, trying by all means to aſſault your ſeveral affections, and as the apoſtle ſpeaks, "to catch you with guile." I can ſay nothing of it; I know it cannot be without its manifold imperfections, ſince I am conſcious of ſo many in myſelf; only this I will adventure to ſay of it, that how defective or empty ſoever it be in other reſpects, yet it is ſtuffed and filled with much true love to, and earneſt deſires after the ſalvation and proſperity of your ſouls. And for the other defects that attend it, I have only two things to offer, in way of excuſe; it is the firſt eſſay that I ever made in this kind, wherein I find no precedent: and it was haſtened for your ſakes, too ſoon out of my hands, that it might be ready to wait upon you, when you undertake your next voyage: ſo that I could not reviſe and poliſh it. Nor indeed was I ſolicitous about the ſtile; I conſider, I write not for critical and learned perſons; my deſign is not to pleaſe your fancies any further, than I might thereby get advantage to profit your ſouls. I will not once queſtion your welcome reception of it: if God ſhall bleſs theſe meditations to

the converſion of any among you, you will be the gainers, and my heart ſhall rejoice, even mine. How comfortably ſhould we ſhake hands with you, when you go abroad, were we perſuaded your ſouls were intereſted in Chriſt, and ſecured from periſhing, in the new covenant? What life would it put into our prayers for you, when you are abroad, to conſider that Jeſus Chriſt is interceding for you in heaven, whilſt we are your remembrancers here on earth? How quiet would our hearts be, when you are abroad in ſtorms, did we know you had a ſpecial intereſt in him whom winds and ſeas obey? To conclude, what joy would it be to your godly relations, to ſee you return new creatures? Doubtleſs more than if you came home laden with the riches of both Indies.

Come, Sirs! ſet the heavenly Jeruſalem upon the point of your *new compaſs*; make all the ſail you can for it; and the Lord give you a proſperous gale, and a ſafe arrival in that land of reſt.

*So prays*

*Your moſt affectionate friend to ſerve you*

*in ſoul-concernments,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

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## To every SEAMAN ſailing Heavenward.

*Ingenious Seamen,*

THE art of Navigation, by which iſlands eſpecially are enriched, and preſerved in ſafety from foreign invaſions; and the wonderful works of God in the great deep, and foreign nations, are moſt delightfully and fully beheld, &c. is an art of exquiſite excellency, ingenuity, rarity, and mirability; but the *art of ſpiritual navigation* is the art of arts. It is a gallant thing to be able to carry a ſhip richly laden round the world; but it is much more gallant to carry a ſoul, (that rich loading, a pearl of more worth than all the merchandize of the world) in a body (that is as liable to leaks and bruiſes as any ſhip is) through the ſea of this world (which is as unſtable as water, and hath the ſame briniſh taſte and ſalt guſt which the waters of the ſea have) ſafe to heaven (the beſt haven) ſo as to avoid ſplitting upon any ſoul-ſinking rocks, or ſtriking upon any ſoul-drowning ſands. The art of natural navigation is a very great myſtery; but the art of ſpiritual navigation is by much a greater myſtery. Human wiſdom may teach us to carry a ſhip to the Indies; but the wiſdom only that is from above can teach us to ſteer our courſe aright to the *haven of happineſs*. This art is purely of *divine revelation*. The truth is, *divinity* (the doctrine of living to God) is nothing elſe but the *art of ſoul-navigation*,

revealed from heaven. A mere man can carry a ſhip to any deſired *port* in all the world, but no mere man can carry a ſoul to heaven. He muſt be a ſaint, he muſt be a divine (ſo all ſaints are) that can be a *pilot* to carry a ſoul to the *fair-haven in* Emanuel's *land*. The art of natural navigation is wonderfully improved ſince the coming of Chriſt, before which time (if there be truth in hiſtory) the uſe of the *load-ſtone* was never known in the world; and before the virtue of that was revealed unto the mariner, it is unſpeakable with what uncertain wanderings ſeamen *floated* here and there, rather than *ſailed* the right and direct way. Sure I am, the art of ſpiritual navigation is wonderfully improved ſince the coming of Chriſt; it oweth its cleareſt and fulleſt diſcovery to the coming of Chriſt. This art of arts is now perfectly revealed in the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; but the rules thereof are diſperſed up and down therein. The collecting and methodizing of the ſame cannot but be a work very uſeful unto ſouls: though, when all is done, there is an abſolute neceſſity of the teachings of the Spirit, and of the anointing that is from above, to make ſouls *artiſts* in ſailing heaven-ward. The *ingenious author* of the *Chriſtian's Compaſs*, or the *Mariner's Companion*, makes three parts of this art (as the ſchoolmen do of divinity) viz. *ſpeculative*, *practical*, and *affectionate*. The principal things neceſſary to be known by a ſpiritual *ſeaman*, in order to the ſteering rightly and ſafely to the *port* of happineſs, he reduceth to four heads, anſwerably to the four general points of the compaſs; making *God* our *north*; *Chriſt* our *eaſt*; *holineſs* our *ſouth*; and *death* our *weſt* points. Concerning God, we muſt know, (1.) That he is, Heb. xi. 6. and that there is but one God, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. (2.) That this God is that ſupreme good, in the enjoyment of whom all true happineſs lies, Pſal. iv. 6, 7. Mat. v. 8. —xviii. 20. (3.) That, life eternal lying in God, and he being incomprehenſible and inconceivable in eſſence, as being a Spirit, our beſt way to eye him is in his attributes, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7. and works, Rom. i. 20. and eſpecially in his Son, 2 Cor. iv. 6. (4.) That as God is a Spirit, ſo our chiefeſt, yea, only way of knowing, enjoying, ſerving, and walking with him, is in the Spirit likewiſe, Job iv. 24. Concerning Chriſt, we muſt know, (1.) That he is the true Sun which ariſeth upon the world, by which all are enlightened, John i. 9. Mal. iii. 2. Luke i. 78, 79. (2.) That God alone is in him, reconciling the world to himſelf, 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 Cor. i. 30. John xiv. 6. (3.) That Jeſus Chriſt is only made ours by the union and indwelling of himſelf in us through the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. and vi. 17. John xvi. 8, 9. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 13. (4.) That the way of the Spirit's uniting us to Chriſt, is by an act of power on his part, and by an act of faith on our part, John iii. 16, 36. and v. 29. Eph. iii. 17. Concerning holineſs, we muſt know, (1.) That whoever is in Chriſt is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 11. (2.) Holineſs is the ſoul's higheſt luſtre, Exod. xv. 11. when we come to perfection in holineſs, then is our ſun at the height in us. (3.) Holineſs is Chriſt's filling the ſoul;

Chriſt our Sun is at the higheſt in our hearts, when they are moſt holy. (4.) This holineſs is that which is directly oppoſite to ſin; ſin eclipſes holineſs, and holineſs ſcatters ſin, Heb. vii. 26. Phil. ii. 15. 2 Pet. iii. 11. Concerning death, we muſt know, (1.) Death is certain; the ſun of our life will ſet in death; when our days come about to this weſtern point, it will be night, Heb. ix. 27. Pſal. xlix. 7, 9. (2.) If we die in our ſins out of Chriſt, we are undone for ever, Job viii. 24. Phil. i. 21. (3.) It is our benighting to die, but it is not our annihilating, 1 Cor. xv. Rev. xx. 12. (4.) After death comes judgment; all that die ſhall ariſe to be judged, either for life or death, the ſecond time, Heb. ix. 27. Mat. xxv. Heb. vi. 2. Theſe four heads, and the particulars under them are as neceſſary to be known in ſpiritual navigation, as the four points of the compaſs are in natural navigation. The things which we ought to do in order to our arrival to our happineſs, our author makes as many as there be points in the compaſs. And for an help to memory, we may begin every particular with the initial, known letters on the points of the compaſs. (1.) N. Never ſtir or ſteer any courſe, but by light from God, Pſalm cxix. 105. Iſa. viii. 10. (2.) N. and by E. Never enter upon any deſign but ſuch as tends towards Chriſt, Acts x. 43. (3.) N. N. E. Note nothing enviouſly, which thrives without God, Pſalm lxxiii. 12, 13. (4.) N. E. and by N. Never enterprize not warrantable courſes to procure any of the moſt prized or conceited advantages, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. (5.) N. E. Now entertain the ſacred commands of God, if hereafter thou expect the ſovereign conſolations of God, Pſal. cxix. 48. (6.) N. E. and by E. Never eſteem Egypt's treaſures ſo much, as for them to forſake the people of God, Heb. xi. 26. (7.) E. N. E. Err not, eſpecially in ſoul-affairs, Jam. i. 16. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. 2 Tim. ii. 18. (8.) E. and by N. Eſchew nothing but ſin, 1 Pet. iii. 11. Job i. 7, 8,—31, 34. (9.) E. Eſtabliſh thy heart with grace, Heb. xiii. 9. (10.) E. and by S. Eye ſanctity in every action, 1 Pet. i. 15. Zech. xiv. 29. (11.) E. S. E. Ever ſtrive earneſtly to live under, and to improve the means of grace. (12.) S. E. and by E. Suffer every evil of puniſhment of ſorrow, rather than leave the ways of Chriſt and grace. (13.) S. E. Sigh earneſtly for more enjoyments of Chriſt. (14.) S. E. and by S. Seek evermore ſome evidences of Chriſt in you the hope of glory. (15.) S. S. E. Still ſet eternity before you, in regard of enjoying Jeſus Chriſt, John xvii. 24. (16.) S. and by E. Settle it ever in your ſoul as a principle which you will never depart from, That holineſs and true happineſs are in Chriſt, and by Chriſt. (17.) S. Set thyſelf always as before the Lord, Pſal. xvi. 8. Acts ii. 25. (18.) S. and by W. See weakneſs haſtening thee to death, even when thou art at the higheſt pitch or point. (19.) S. S. W. See ſin which is the ſting of death, as taken away by Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. (20.) S. W. and by S. Store up wiſely ſome proviſions every day for your dying day. (21.) S. W. Set worldly

things under your feet, before death come to look you in the face (22.) S. W. and by W. Still weigh and watch with loins girded, and lamps trimmed, Luke xii. 35, 36, 37. (23.) W. S. W. Weigh ſoul-works, and all in the balance of the ſanctuary. (24.) W. and by S. Walk in ſweet communion with Chriſt here, and ſo thou mayeſt die in peace, Luke ii. 29. (25.) W. Whatſoever thy condition be in this world, eye God as the diſpoſer of it, and therein be contented, Phil. iv. 11. (26.) W. and by N. Walk not according to the courſe of the moſt, but after the example of the beſt. (27.) W. N. W. Weigh not what men ſpeak or think of thee, ſo God approve thee, 2 Chron. x. 18. Rom. ii. 28, 29. (28.) N. W. and by W. Never wink at, but watch againſt ſmall ſins, nor neglect little duties, Eph. v. 15. (29.) N. W. Never wiſh raſhly for death, nor love life too inordinately, Job iii. 4. (30.) N. W. and by N. Now work nimbly ere night come, Job xii. 35, 36. Eccleſ. ix. 10. (31.) N. N. W. Name nothing when thou pleadeſt with God for thy ſoul, but Chriſt and free-grace, Dan. ix. 17. (32.) N. and by W. Now welcome Chriſt, if at death thou wouldſt be welcomed by Chriſt. A tender, quick, enlivened, and enlightened conſcience, is the only point on which we muſt erect theſe practical rules of our Chriſtian compaſs, Heb. xiii. 1, 2 Cor. i. 12. Our memory, that is the *box* in which this compaſs muſt be kept, in which theſe rules muſt be treaſured, that we may be as ready and expert in them as the *mariner* is in his ſea-compaſs. So much for the ſpeculative and practical parts of the art of ſpiritual-navigation. The affectionate part doth principally lie in the ſecret motions or movings of the ſoul towards God in the affections, which are raiſed and warmed, and eſpecially appear active in meditation; meditation being, as it were, the limbec, or ſtill, in which the affections heat and melt, and, as it were, drop ſweet ſpiritual waters. The affectionate author of the *Chriſtian's Compaſs* doth indeed, in the third and laſt part of his undertaking, hint at ſeveral meditations which the ſpiritual ſeaman is to be acquainted with, unto which thou haſt an excellent ſupplement in this *New Compaſs for Seamen*. This collection is prefixed, that at once thou mayeſt view all the compaſſes (both ſpeculative, practical, and affectionate) by which thou muſt ſteer heaven-ward. What further ſhall be added by way of preface, is not to commend this new compaſs, which indeed (2 Cor. iii. 1.) needs no συϛατικων επιϛολων, *letters of commendation*, or any panegyric to uſher it into an honeſt heart; but to ſtir up all, eſpecially ſeamen, to make conſcience of uſing ſuch choice helps for the promoting the ſanctification and ſalvation of their ſouls, for the making of them as dexterous in the art of ſpiritual navigation, as any of them are in the art of natural navigation. Conſider therefore,

1. What rich merchandiſe thy ſoul is. Chriſt aſſures us, one ſoul is more worth than all the world. The Lord Jeſus doth, as it were, put the whole world into one ſcale, and one ſoul in the other, and the world is found too light, Matth. xvi. 26. Shouldſt thou by ſin

in natural navigation carry ſafe all the treaſures of the Indies into thine own port, yea, gain the whole world, and for want of ſkill in ſpiritual navigation loſe thy own ſoul, thou wouldeſt be the greateſt loſer in the world. So far wilt thou be from profiting by any of thy ſea-voyages. There is a plain μειωσις in thoſe words of Chriſt, "What is "a man profited if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own "ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?" More is meant than is ſpoken*.

2. What a leaking veſſel thy body is,† in which this unſpeakable, inconceivable rich treaſure, thy ſoul, is embarked! O the many diſeaſes and diſtempers in the humours and paſſions that thy body is ſubject to! It is above 2000 years ago, that there have been reckoned up 300 names of diſeaſes; and there be many under one name, and many nameleſs, which poſe the phyſicians not only how to cure them, but how to call them. And for the affections and paſſions of the mind, the diſtempers of them, are no leſs deadly to ſome, than the diſeaſes of the body; but beſides theſe internal cauſes, there are many external cauſes of leaks in this veſſel, as ‡ poiſonous malignities, wrathful hoſtilities, and caſual miſhaps; very ſmall matters may be of great moment to the ſinking of this veſſel. The leaſt gnat in the air may choak one, as it did Adrian, a pope of Rome; a little hair in milk may ſtrangle one, as it did a counſellor in Rome; a little ſtone of a raiſin may ſtop one's breath, as was the caſe of the poet Anacreon. Thus you ſee what a leaking veſſel you ſail in. Now the more leaky any ſhip is, the more need there is of ſkill to ſteer wiſely.

3. Conſider what a dangerous ſea the world is in which thy ſoul is to ſail in the leaking ſhip of thy body. As there are not more changes in the ſea, than are in the world, the world being only conſtant in inconſtancy, "The faſhion of this world paſſeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 31. So there are not more dangers in the ſea for ſhips, than there are in the world for ſouls. In this world ſouls meet with rocks and ſands, ſyrens and pyrates; worldly temptations, worldly luſts, and worldly company cauſe many to "drown themſelves in perdition," 1 Tim. vi. 9. The very things of this world endanger your ſouls. By worldly objects we ſoon grow worldly. It is hard to touch pitch, and not be defiled. The luſts of this world ſtain all our glory, and the men of this world pollute all they converſe with. A man that keeps company with the men of this world, is like him that walketh in the ſun, tanned inſenſibly. Thus I have hinted to you the dangerouſneſs of the ſea wherein you are to ſail. Now the more dangerous the ſea is, the more requiſite it is that the ſailor be an artiſt.

4. Conſider, what if through want of ſkill in the heavenly art of

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* Eraſmi chiliad. p. 229.

† The ſmalleſt pore is a leak wide enough to let in death, and ſink thy veſſel.

‡ In Ethiopia there is a certain poiſon whereof the tenth part of one grain will kill a man, and for one grain ten men. *Dan. Sennert. Hypom. Phyſ. cap. 2. p. 47.*

ſpiritual navigation, thou ſhouldſt not ſteer thy courſe aright! I will inſtance only in two conſequents thereof. 1. Thou wilt never arrive at the haven of happineſs. 2. Thou ſhalt be drowned in the ocean of God's wrath. As true as the word of God is true, as ſure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet; as ſure as thou yet liveſt, and breatheſt in this air; ſo true and certain it is, thou ſhalt never enter into heaven, but ſink into the deep of the bottomleſs pit. Am I not herein a meſſenger of the ſaddeſt tidings that ever yet thy ears did hear? Poſſibly now thou makeſt a light matter of theſe things, becauſe thou doſt not know what it is to miſs of heaven, what it is for ever to lie under the wrath of God; but hereafter thou wilt know fully what it is to have thy ſoul loſt eternally, ſo loſt, as that God's mercies, and all the good there is in Chriſt, ſhall never ſave it; and as God hath ſet and ordered things, can never ſave it. Hereafter thou wilt be perfectly ſenſible of the good that thou mighteſt have had, and of the evil that ſhall be upon thee (this is God's peculiar prerogative, to make a creature as ſenſible of miſery as he pleaſeth) then thou wilt have other thoughts of theſe things than thou now haſt. Then the thoughts of thy mind ſhall be buſied about thy loſt condition, both as to the pain of loſs, and the pain of ſenſe *, ſo that thou ſhalt not be able to take any eaſe one moment; then, that thy torments may be increaſed, they acknowledge the truth of thy apprehenſions, yea, the ſtrength of them ſhall be increaſed; thou ſhalt have the true and deep apprehenſions of the greatneſs of that good that thou ſhalt miſs of, and of that evil which thou ſhalt procure unto thyſelf; and then thou ſhalt not be able to chuſe, but to apply all thy loſs, all thy miſery to thyſelf, which will force thee to roar out, O my loſs! O my miſery! O my inconceivable, irrecoverable loſs and miſery! yea, for the increaſing of thy torments, thy affections and memory ſhall be enlarged. O that, to prevent that loſs and miſery, theſe things may now be known, and laid to heart! O that a blind underſtanding, a ſtupid judgment, a bribed conſcience, a hard heart, a bad memory, may no longer make heaven and hell to ſeem but trifles to thee! thou wilt then eaſily be perſuaded to make it thy main buſineſs here, to become an artiſt in *ſpiritual navigation*. But to ſhut up this preface, I ſhall briefly acquaint *ſeamen*, why they ſhould, of all others, be men of ſingular piety and heavenlineſs, and therefore more than ordinarily ſtudy the heavenly art of *ſpiritual navigation*. O that *ſeamen* would then conſider,

1. How nigh they border upon the confines of death and eternity every moment; there is but a ſtep, but an inch or two between them and their graves, continually: the next guſt may over-ſet them, the next wave may ſwallow them up. In one place lie lurking dangerous

* The flames of hell ſhall ſhine about the damned, to let them ſee how they are tormented. *Infid.* on the chief good. Book. 2.

rocks, in another perilous ſands, and every where ſtormy winds, ready to deſtroy them. * Well may the *ſeamen* cry out, *Ego craſtinum non habui*; I have not had a to-morrow in my hands theſe many years. Should not they then be extraodinary ſerious and heavenly continually! Certainly (as the reverend *author* of this *new compaſs* well obſerves) nothing more compoſeth the heart to ſuch a frame, than the lively apprehenſions of eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than *ſeamen* have.

2. Conſider *(ſeamen)* what extraordinary help you have by the book of the creatures; "The whole creation is God's voice; it is "God's excellent † hand-writing, or the ſacred ſcriptures of the "moſt High," to teach us much of God, and what reaſons we have to bewail our rebellion againſt God, and to make conſcience of obeying God only, naturally, and continually. The heavens, the earth, the waters, are the three great leaves of this book of God, and all the creatures are ſo many lines in thoſe leaves. All that learn not to fear and ſerve God by the help of this book, will be left inexcuſable, Rom. i. 20. How inexcuſable then will ignorant and ungodly *ſeamen* be! *Seamen* ſhould, in this reſpect, be the beſt ſcholars in the Lord's ſchool, ſeeing they do, more than others, ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the great deep, Pſal. cvii. 24.

3. Conſider how often you are nearer heaven than any people in the world. "They mount up to heaven," Pſal. cvii. 26. It has been ſaid of an ungodly miniſter, that contradicted his preaching in his life and converſation, that it was pity he ſhould ever come out of the pulpit, becauſe he was there as near heaven as ever he would be. Shall it be ſaid of you, upon the ſame account, that it is a pity you ſhould come down from the high towering waves of the ſea? Should not *ſeamen* that in ſtormy weather have their feet (as it were) upon the battlements of heaven, look down upon all earthly happineſs in this world but as baſe, wateriſh, and worthleſs? The great cities of Campania ſeem but ſmall cottages to them that ſtand on the Alps. Should not *ſeamen*, that ſo oft mount up to heaven, make it their main buſineſs here, once at laſt to get into heaven? What! *(ſeamen)* ſhall you only go to heaven againſt your wills? When *ſeamen* mount up to heaven in a ſtorm, the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, That "their ſouls are "melted becauſe of trouble." O that you were continually as unwilling to go to hell, as you are in a ſtorm to go to heaven!

4. And laſtly, Conſider what engagements lie upon you to be ſingularly holy, from your ſingular deliverances and ſalvations. They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, are ſometimes in the valley of the ſhadow of death, by reaſon of the ſpringing of perilous leaks; and yet miraculouſly delivered, either by ſome wonderful ſtopping of the leak, or by God's ſending ſome ſhip within their ſight, when they

* *Terror ubique tremor, timor undeque terror.* Ovid.
† *Mundi creatio eſt Scriptura Dei.* Clemens. *Univerſus mundus eſt Deus explicatus.*

have been far out of ſight of any land; or by his bringing their near-periſhing ſhip ſafe to ſhore. Sometimes they have been in very great danger of being taken by pyrates, yet wonderfully preſerved, either by God's calming of the winds in that part of the ſea where the pyrates have ſailed, or by giving the poor purſued ſhip a ſtrong gale of wind to run away from their purſuers, or by ſinking the pyrates, &c. Sometimes their ſhips have been caſt away, and yet they themſelves wonderfully got ſafe to ſhore upon planks, yards, maſts, &c. I might be endleſs in enumerating their deliverances from drowning, from burning, from ſlavery, &c. Sure *(ſeamen)* your extraordinary ſalvations lay more than ordinary engagements upon you, to praiſe, love, fear, obey, and truſt in your Saviour and Deliverer. I have read that the enthralled Greeks were ſo affected with their liberty, procured by Flaminius the Roman general, that their ſhrill acclamations of Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ, *a Saviour, a Saviour!* made the very birds fall down from the heavens aſtoniſhed. O how ſhould *ſeamen* be affected with their *ſea-deliverances!* many that have been delivered from Turkiſh *ſlavery* have vowed to be ſervants to their *redeemers* all the days of their lives. Ah! Sirs, will not you be more than ordinarily God's ſervants all the days of your lives, ſeeing you have been ſo oft, ſo wonderfully redeemed from death itſelf by him? Verily, do what you can, you will die in God's debt. "As for me, God forbid that I ſhould ſin againſt the "Lord in ceaſing to pray for you," 1 Sam. xii. 23, 24. That by the peruſal of this ſhort and ſweet treatiſe, wherein the judicious and ingenious author hath well mixed *utile dulci*, profit and pleaſure, you may learn the good and right way, even to fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth with all your hearts, conſidering how great things he hath done for you. This is the hearty prayer of

*Your cordial friend, earneſtly deſirous of a proſperous voyage for your precious and immortal ſouls,* T. M.

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## THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

WHEN dewy-cheek'd Aurora doth diſplay
Her curtains, to let in the new-born day,
Her heav'nly face looks red, as if it were
Dy'd with a modeſt bluſh, 'twixt ſhame and fear.
Sol makes her bluſh, ſuſpecting that he will
Scorch ſome too much, and others leave too chill.
With ſuch a bluſh, my little new-born book
Goes out of hand, ſuſpecting ſome may look
Upon it with contempt, while others raiſe
So mean a piece too high, by flat'ring praiſe,
Its beauty cannot make its father dote;
'Tis a poor babe clad in a ſea-green coat.

'Tis gone from me too young, and now is run
To ſea, among the tribe of Zebulun.
Go little book, thou many friends wilt find
Among that tribe, who will be very kind;
And many of them care of thee will take,
Both for thy own, and for thy father's ſake.
Heav'n ſave it from the dang'rous ſtorms and guſts
That will be rais'd againſt it by men's luſts.
Guilt makes men angry, anger is a ſtorm,
But ſacred truth's thy ſhelter, fear no harm.
On times, or perſons, no reflection's found!
Though with reflections few books more abound.
Go, little book, I have much more to ſay,
But ſeamen call for thee, thou muſt away:
Yet ere you have it, grant me one requeſt,
Pray do not keep it pris'ner in your cheſt.

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A

# NEW COMPASS

FOR

# *SEAMEN:*

OR,

## NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED.

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### CHAP. I.

*The launching of a ſhip plainly ſets forth*
*Our double ſtate, by firſt and ſecond birth.*

OBSERVATION.

NO ſooner is a ſhip built, launched, rigged, victualled, and manned, but ſhe is preſently ſent out into the boiſterous ocean, where ſhe is never at reſt, but continually fluctuating, toſſing, and labouring, until ſhe be either overwhemled, and wrecked in the ſea; or through age, knocks, and bruiſes, grow leaky, and unſerviceable; and ſo is haled up, and ript abroad.

APPLICATION.

No ſooner come we into the world as men, or as Chriſtians, by a natural or ſupernatural birth, but thus we are toſſed upon a ſea of

troubles. Job v. 7. "Yet man is born to trouble, as the ſparks fly "upwards." The ſpark no ſooner comes out of the fire, but it flies up naturally; it needs not any external force, help, or guidance, but aſcends from a principle in itſelf; ſo naturally, ſo eaſily doth trouble riſe out of ſin. There is *radically* all the miſery, anguiſh, and trouble in the world in our corrupt natures. As the ſpark lies cloſe hid in the coals, ſo doth miſery in ſin; every ſin draws a rod after it. And theſe ſorrows and troubles fall not only on the body, in thoſe breaches, flaws, deformities, pains, aches, diſeaſes, to which it is ſubject, which are but the groans of dying nature, and its crumbling, by degrees, into duſt again; but on all our employments and callings alſo, Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. Theſe are full of pain, trouble, and diſappointment, Hag. i. 6. We earn wages, and put it into a bag with holes, and diſquiet ourſelves in vain; all our relations full of trouble. The apoſtle ſpeaking to thoſe that marry, ſaith, 1 Cor. vii. 28. "Such ſhall have trouble in the fleſh." Upon which words one gloſſeth thus: Fleſh and trouble are married together, whether we marry or no; but they that are married, marry with, and match into new troubles: All relations have their burdens, as well as their comforts: It were endleſs to enumerate the ſorrows of this kind, and yet the troubles of the body are but the body of our troubles; the ſpirit of the curſe falls upon the ſpiritual and nobleſt part of man. The ſoul and body, like to Ezekiel's roll, are written full with ſorrows, both within and without. So that we make the ſame report of our lives, when we come to die, that old Jacob made before Pharaoh, Gen. xlvii. 9. "Few and evil have the days of the years of our lives been." Eccl. ii. 22, 23. "For what hath man of all his labour, and of the "vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the ſun? "For all his days are ſorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart "taketh no reſt in the night: This is alſo vanity."

*See Mr Whateley's Care-cloth.*

Neither doth our new birth free us from troubles, though then they be ſanctified, ſweetned, and turned into bleſſings to us. We put not off the human, when we put on the divine nature; nor are we then freed from the ſenſe, though we are delivered from the ſting and curſe of them. Grace doth not preſently pluck out all thoſe arrows that ſin hath ſhot into the ſides of nature. 2 Cor. vii. 5. "When we were come into Macedonia, our fleſh had no reſt, but "we were troubled on every ſide: Without were fightings, and "within were fears." Rev. vii. 14. "Theſe are they that come out "of great tribulations." The firſt cry of the new-born Chriſtian (ſays one) gives hell an alarm, and awakens the rage both of devils and men againſt him. Hence Paul and Barnabas acquainted thoſe new converts, Acts xiv. 22. "That through much tribulation they muſt "enter into the kingdom of God." And we find the ſtate of the church, in this world, ſet out (Iſa. liv. 11.) by the ſimilitude of a diſtreſſed ſhip at ſea: "O thou afflicted [and toſſed] with tempeſts,

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Our double State by firſt and ſecond Birth.
Page 12.

In the vaſt Ocean, Spiritual Eyes deſcry
God's boundleſs Mercy, and Eternity.
Page 16.

Within theſe ſmooth-faced ſeas ſtrange creatures crawl;
Men's Hearts, far ſtranger than them all.

Seas purge themſelves, and caſt their Filth aſhore;
But graceleſs Souls retain and ſuck in more.
Page 22.

Seamen foreſee a Danger, and prepare:
Yet few of greater Dangers are aware.
Page 24.

How ſmall a matter turns a Ship about?
Yet we againſt our Conſcience ſtand it out.
Page 26.

Through many Fears and Dangers Seamen run,
But all's forgotten, when they do return.

The Navigator ſhifts his Sails to take
All Winds, but that which for his Soul doth make.
Page 32.

If Seamen loſe a Gale, there they my lie,
The Soul, when once becalm'd, with Sin may d...
Page 34.

By Navigation one Place ſtores another;
And by Communion we muſt help each other.
Page 36.

The Rocks abide, the Seas againſt them rage;
So ſhall the Church, which is God's Heritage.
Page 39.

What Dangers run they for little Gain?
Who for their Souls would ne'er take half the pains
Page 41.

Millions of Creatures in the Sea are fed,
Why then are Saints in doubt of daily Bread?
Page 43.

Sea-wat... drained through the Earth are ſweet;
So ... Afflictions which God's People meet.
Page 46.

The Seas within their bounds the Lord contains;
He alſo Men and Devils holds in Chains.
Page 48.

To Sea without a Compaſs none dare go;
Our Courſe without the Word is even ...
Page 50.

If you that croſs
Would by this
The greateſt Storm
Nor need you
This Compaſs tru
Your Courſe w
That on no Rock y
Unleſs they it n
Could you but lear
Then who wou
What inward Cal
Might your poo
Sirs! if you would
Some Pains this
You might be then
And make a rich
When you have wa
And Time to be
As you'd be bleſt,
And ſpend ſome
If this may win you
To God, from Se
You'll find it ſweet,
As center'd Lines
Bodily exerciſe profit
neſs is profitable u
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Look as the Sea by turns doth ebb and flow,
So their Estates that use it come and go.
*Page* 53.

Like hungry Lions, Waves for Sinners gape
Leave then your Sins behind, if you'll escape.
*Page* 56.

To save the Ship, rich Ladings cast away;
Thy Soul is shipwreck'd, if thy Lusts do stay.
*Page* 58.

Christ with a Word can surging Waves appease;
His Voice a troubled Soul can quickly ease.
*Page* 60.

Our Food out of the Sea God doth command,
Yet few herein take Notice of his Hand.
*Page* 62.

Whilst thou by Art the silly Fish dost kill,
Perchance the Devil's Hook sticks in thy Gill.
*Page* 64.

Doth Trading fail, and Voyages prove bad?
If you cannot discern the Cause 'tis sad.
*Page* 66.

In Seas the greater Fish the less devour;
So some Men crush all those within their power
*Page* 68.

In Storms to spread much Sail indangers all;
So carnal Mirth, if God for Mourning call.
*Page* 70.

A little Leak neglected dangerous proves:
One Sin connived at, the Soul undoes.
*Page* 72.

Ships make much way when they a trade-wind get,
With such a Wind the Saints have ever met.
*Page* 74.

Storms make Discov'ry of the Pilot's Skill;
God's Wisdom in Affliction triumphs still.
*Page* 76.

Things in the bottom are unseen; no Eye
Can trace God's Paths, which in the Deeps do lie.
*Page* 86.

Millions of Men are sunk into the Main,
But it shall not those Dead always retain.
*Page* 88.

The Seaman's greatest Danger's near the Coast;
When we are ourselves Heaven the Danger's most.
*Page* 90.

How glad are Seamen when they make the Shore!
And Saints no less, when all their Danger's o'er.
*Page* 93.

The Launching of a Ship plainly sets forth

and not comforted." [Toſſed] as Jonah's ſhip was; for the ſame word is there uſed, Jonah i. 11, 13. as a veſſel at ſea, ſtormed, and violently driven without rudder, maſt, ſail, or tackling. Nor are we to expect freedom from thoſe troubles, until harboured in heaven; ſee 2 Theſſ. i. 7. O what large catalogues of experiences do the ſaints carry to heaven with them, for their various exerciſes, dangers, trials, and marvellous preſervations and deliverances out of all! and yet all theſe troubles without, are nothing to thoſe within them; from temptations, corruptions, deſertions, by paſſion and compaſſion; Beſides their own, there come daily upon them the troubles of others; many rivulets fall into this channel and brim, yea, often overflow the bank. Pſalm xxxiv. 19. "Many are the afflictions of the righte-" ous."

REFLECTION.

Hence ſhould the graceleſs heart thus reflect upon itſelf, O my ſoul! into what a ſea of troubles art thou launched forth! and what a ſad caſe art thou in! full of trouble, and full of ſin; and theſe do mutually produce each other. And that which is the moſt dreadful conſideration of all, is that I cannot ſee the end of them. As for the ſaints, they ſuffer in the world as well as I; but it is but for a while, 1 Pet. v. 10. and then they ſuffer no more, 2 Theſſ. i. 7. "But all" tears ſhall be wiped away from their eyes," Rev. vii. 17. But my troubles look with a long viſage, ah! they are but the beginning of ſorrows, but a parboiling before I be roaſted in the flames of God's eternal wrath. If I continue as I am, I ſhall but deceive myſelf, if I conclude I ſhall be happy in the other world, becauſe I have met with ſo much ſorrow in this: For I read, Jude, ver. 7. that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, though conſumed to aſhes, with all their eſtates and relations, (a ſorer temporal judgment than ever yet befel me) do, notwithſtanding that, continue ſtill in "everlaſting" chains, under darkneſs, in which they are reſerved unto the judg-" ment of the great day." Theſe troubles of the ſaints are ſanctified to them, but mine are fruits of the curſe. They have ſpiritual conſolations to balance them, which flow into their ſouls in the ſame height and degree, as troubles do upon their bodies, 2 Cor. i. 5. But I am a ſtranger to their comforts, and "intermeddle not with their" joys," Prov. xiv. 10. If their hearts be ſurcharged with trouble, they have a God to go to; and when they have opened their cauſe before him, they are eaſed, return with comfort and their "counte-" nance is no more ſad," 1 Sam. i. 18. When their belly is as bottles full of new wine, they can give it vent by pouring out their ſouls into their Father's boſom: but I have no intereſt in, nor acquaintance with this God, nor can I pray unto him in the Spirit. My griefs are ſhut up like fire in my boſom, which preys upon my ſpirit. This is my ſorrow, and I alone muſt bear it. O my ſoul,

look round about thee! what a miſerable caſe art thou in? Reſt no longer ſatisfied in it, but look out for a Chriſt alſo. What though I am a vile, unworthy wretch? yet he promiſeth to *love freely*, Hoſ. xiv. 4. and invites ſuch as are heavy laden to him, Mat. xi. 28.

Hence alſo ſhould the gracious ſoul reflect ſweetly upon itſelf after this manner: And is the world ſo full of trouble? O my ſoul! what cauſe haſt thou to ſtand admiring at the indulgence and goodneſs of God to thee? Thou haſt hitherto had a ſmooth paſſage, comparatively to what others have had. How hath Divine Wiſdom ordered my condition, and caſt my lot? Have I been chaſtiſed with whips? others with ſcorpions. Have I had no peace without? ſome have neither had peace without or within, but terrors round about. Or have I felt trouble in my fleſh and ſpirit at once? yet have they not been extreme, either for time or meaſure. And hath the world been a Sodom, an Egypt to thee? Why then doſt thou thus linger in it, and hanker after it? Why do I not long to be gone, and ſigh more heartily for deliverance? Why are the thoughts of my Lord's coming no ſweeter to me, and the day of my full deliverance no more panted for? And why am I no more careful to maintain peace within, ſince there is ſo much trouble without? Is not this it that puts weight into all outward troubles, and makes them ſinking, that they fall upon me when my ſpirit is dark, or wounded?

## THE POEM.

My ſoul, art thou beſieg'd
With troubles round about;
If thou be wiſe, take this advice,
To keep theſe troubles out.

Wiſe men will *keep* their conſcience as their eyes;
For in their *conſcience* their beſt treaſure lies.
See you be *tender* of your inward peace,
That ſhipwreck'd, *then* your mirth and joy muſt ceaſe:
If God from *you* your outward comforts rend,
You'll find what *need* you have of ſuch a friend.
If this be *not* by ſin deſtroy'd and loſt,
You need not *fear*, your peace will quit your coſt.
If you'd know *how* to ſweeten any grief,
Tho' ne'er ſo *great*, or to procure relief
Againſt th' *afflictions*, which, like deadly darts,
Moſt fatal *are* to men of carnal hearts;
Reject not *that* which conſcience bids you chuſe;
And chuſe not *you* what conſcience ſaith, refuſe.
If ſin you *muſt*, or miſery under-lie,
Reſolve to *bear*, and chuſe the miſery.

## CHAP. II.

*In the vaſt ocean ſpiritual eyes deſcry*
*God's boundleſs mercy, and eternity.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE ocean is of vaſt extent and depth, though ſuppoſedly meaſurable, yet not to be ſounded by man. It compaſſeth about the whole earth, which, in the account of Geographers, is twenty-one thouſand and ſix hundred miles in compaſs; yet the ocean environs it on every ſide, Pſalm civ. 35. and Job xi. 9. Suitable to which is that of the poet.*

"He ſpread the ſeas, which then he did command,
"To ſwell with winds, and compaſs round the land."

And for its depth, who can diſcover it? The ſea in Scripture is called the *deep*, Job xxxviii. 30. the *great deep*, Gen. vii. 11. the gathering together of the *waters* into one place, Gen. i. 9. If the vaſteſt mountain were caſt into it, it would appear no more than the head of a pin in a tun of water.

### APPLICATION.

This, in a lively manner, ſhadows forth the infinite and incomprehenſible mercy of our God, whoſe mercy is ſaid to be over all his works, Pſal. cxlv. 9. In how many ſweet notions is the mercy of God repreſented to us in the Scripture? He is ſaid to be *plenteous*, Pſalm ciii. 8. *abundant*, 1 Pet. i. 3. *rich in mercy*, Epheſ. ii. 4. then, that his mercies are *unſearchable*, Epheſ. iii. 8. "High as the heavens above "the earth," Pſalm x. 4. which are ſo high and vaſt, that the whole earth is but a ſmall point to them; yea, they are not only compared to the heavens, but, to come home to the *metaphor*, to the depths of the ſea, Mic. vii. 19. which can ſwallow up mountains as well as molehills; and in this ſea God hath drowned ſins of a dreadful height and aggravation, even *ſcarlet*, *crimſon*, i. e. deep dyed with many intenſive aggravations, Iſa. i. 18. In this ſea was the ſin of Manaſſeh drowned, and of what magnitude that was, may be ſeen, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3. yea, in this ocean of mercy did the Lord drown and cover the ſins of Paul, though a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, injurious, 1 Tim. i. 13. "None (ſaith Auguſtine) more fierce than Paul among "the perſecutors, and therefore none greater among ſinners:" To which himſelf willingly ſubſcribes, 1 Tim. i. 15. *yet pardoned.* How hath mercy rode in triumph, and been glorified upon the vileſt of

* *Tum freta diffudit rapidiſque tumeſcere ventis*
*Juſſit, & ambitæ circumdare littera terræ.* Ovid.

men! How hath it ſtopped the ſlanderous mouths of men and devils. It hath yearned upon "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners;" to ſuch have the ſceptre of mercy been ſtretched forth, upon their unfeigned repentance and ſubmiſſion, 1 Cor. vi. 9. What doth the Spirit of God aim at in ſuch a large accumulation of names of mercy? but to convince poor ſinners of the abundant fulneſs and riches of it, if they will but ſubmit to the terms on which it is tendered to them.

In the vaſtneſs of the ocean, we have alſo a lively emblem of eternity. Who can comprehend or meaſure the ocean, but God? And who can comprehend eternity but he that is ſaid *to inhabit it?* Iſa. lvii. 5. Though ſhallow rivers may be drained and dried up, yet the ocean cannot. And though theſe tranſitory days, months, and years will at laſt expire and determine; yet eternity ſhall not. O! it is a long word! and amazing matter! what is eternity but a conſtant permanency of perſons and things, in one and the ſame ſtate and condition for ever; putting them beyond all poſſibility of change? The heathens were wont to ſhadow it by a circle, or a ſnake twiſted round. It will be to all of us, either a perpetual day or night, which will not be meaſured by watches, hours, minutes. And as it cannot be meaſured, ſo neither can it ever be diminiſhed. When thouſands of years are gone, there is not a minute leſs to come. Gerhard and Drexelius do both illuſtrate it by this known ſimilitude: Suppoſe a bird were to come once in a thouſand years to ſome vaſt mountain of ſand, and carry away in her bill one grain in a thouſand years; O what a vaſt time would it be e'er that immortal bird, after that rate, ſhould carry off the mountain! and yet in time this might be done. For there would ſtill be ſome diminution; but in eternity there can be none. There be three things in time, which are not competent to eternity: In time there is a *ſucceſſion*, one generation, year, and day paſſeth, and another comes; but eternity is a fixed [*now*]. In time there is a *diminution* and waſting, the more is paſt, the leſs is to come. But it is not ſo in eternity. In time there is an *alteration* of condition and ſtates: A man may be poor to-day, and rich to-morrow; ſickly and diſeaſed this week, and well the next; now in contempt, and anon in honour: But no changes paſs upon us in eternity. As the tree falls at death and judgment, ſo it lies for ever. If in heaven, there thou art a pillar, and ſhalt go forth no more, Rev. iii. 12. If in hell, no redemption thence, but the ſmoak of their torment aſcendeth for ever and ever, Rev. xix. 3.

REFLECTION.

And is the mercy of God like the great deep, an ocean that none can fathom? What unſpeakable comfort is this to me? may the pardoned ſoul ſay. Did Iſrael ſing a ſong, when the Lord had overwhelmed their corporeal enemies in the ſeas? And ſhall not I break forth into his praiſes, who hath drowned all my ſins in the depth of mercy?

O my ſoul, bleſs thou the Lord, and let his high praiſes ever be in thy mouth. Mayeſt thou not ſay, that he hath gone to as high an extent and degree of mercy in pardoning thee, as ever he did in any? O my God, who is like unto thee! that pardoneth iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin. What mercy, but the mercy of a God, could cover ſuch abomination as mine?

But O! what terrible reflections will conſcience make from hence, upon all deſpiſers of mercy, when the ſinner's eyes come to be opened too late for mercy, to do them good! We have heard indeed, that the king of heaven was a merciful king, but we would make no addreſs to him, whilſt that ſceptre was ſtretched out. We heard of balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there, that was able and willing to cure all our wounds, but we would not commit ourſelves to him. We read, that the arms of Chriſt were open to embrace and receive us, but we would not. O unparalleled folly! O ſoul-deſtroying madneſs! Now the womb of mercy is ſhut up, and ſhall bring forth no more mercies to me for ever. Now the gates of grace are ſhut, and no cries can open them.

Mercy acted its part, and is gone off the ſtage; and now juſtice enters the ſcene, and will be glorified for ever upon me. How often did I hear the bowels of compaſſion ſounding in the goſpel for me? But my hard and impenitent heart could not relent; and now, if it could, it is too late. I am now paſt out of the ocean of mercy, into the ocean of eternity, where I am fixed in the midſt of endleſs miſery, and ſhall never hear the voice of mercy more!

O dreadful eternity! O ſoul-confounding word! An ocean indeed, to which this ocean is but as a drop; for in thee no ſoul ſhall ſee either bank or bottom. If I lie but one night under ſtrong pains of body, how tedious doth that night ſeem! And how do I tell the clock, and wiſh for day! In the world I might have had life, and would not. And now, how fain would I have death, but cannot? How quick were my ſins in execution? And how long is their puniſhment in duration? O! how ſhall I dwell with everlaſting burnings? Oh that God would but vouchſafe one treaty more with me! But alas, all tenders and treaties are now at an end with me. On earth peace, Luke ii. 13. but none in hell. O my ſoul! conſider theſe things; come, let us debate this matter ſeriouſly, before we launch out into this ocean.

## THE POEM.

WHO from ſome high-rais'd tower views the ground,
His heart doth tremble, and his head goes round;
Even ſo my ſoul, whilſt it doth view and think
On this eternity, upon whoſe brink
It borders, ſtands amazed, and doth cry,
O boundleſs! bottomleſs eternity!

The ſcourge of hell, whoſe very laſh doth rend
The damned ſouls in twain: What! never end?
The more thereon they ponder, think, and pore,
The more, poor wretches, ſtill they howl and roar.
Ah! though more years in torments we ſhould lie,
Than ſands are on the ſhores, or in the ſky
Are twinkling ſtars; yet this gives ſome relief!
The hope of ending. Ah! but here's the grief!
A thouſand years in torments paſt and gone,
Ten thouſand more afreſh are coming on;
And when theſe thouſands all their courſe have run,
The end's no more than when it firſt begun.
Come then, my ſoul, let us diſcourſe together
This weighty point, and tell me plainly whether
You for theſe ſhort-liv'd joys, that come and go,
Will plunge yourſelf and me in endleſs woe.
Reſolve the queſtion quickly, do not dream
More time away. Lo, in an haſty ſtream
We ſwiftly paſs, and ſhortly we ſhall be
Ingulphed both in this eternity.

## CHAP. III.

*Within theſe ſmooth-fac'd ſeas ſtrange creatures crawl;*
*But in man's heart far ſtranger than them all.*

### OBSERVATION.

IT was an unadviſed ſaying of Plato, *Mare nil memorabile producit:* the ſea produceth nothing memorable. But ſurely there is much of the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of God manifeſted in thoſe inhabitants of the watery region: notwithſtanding the ſea's azure and ſmiling face, ſtrange creatures are bred in its womb. "O Lord, "(ſaith David) how manifold are thy works: In wiſdom haſt thou "made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and "wide ſea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and "great beaſts," Pſal. civ. 24, 25. And we read, Lam. iv. 3. of Sea-monſters, which draw out their breaſts to their young. Pliny and Purchas tell incredible ſtories about them. About the tropic of Capricorn, our ſeamen meet with flying fiſhes, that have wings like a rere-mouſe, but of a ſilver colour; they fly in flocks like ſtares. There are creatures of very ſtrange forms and properties; ſome reſembling a cow, called by the Spaniards, *manates*, by ſome ſuppoſed to be the ſea-monſter ſpoken of by Jeremy. In the rivers of Guinea, Purchas ſaith, there are fiſhes that have four eyes, bearing two above, and two beneath the water, when they ſwim: both reſembling a toad, and very poiſonous. How ſtrange, both in ſhape and property, is the

ſword-fiſh and threſher, that fight with the whale: Even our own ſeas produce creatures of ſtrange ſhapes, but the commonneſs takes off the wonder.

APPLICATION.

Thus doth the heart of man naturally ſwarm and abound with ſtrange and monſtrous luſts and abominations, Rom. i. 29, 30, 31. "Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, "malignity; whiſperers, backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, "boaſters, inventors of evil things, diſobedient to parents, without "underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, im-"placable, unmerciful." O what a ſwarm is here! and yet there are multitudes more, in the depths of the heart! And it is no wonder, conſidering that with this nature, we received the ſpawn of the blackeſt and vileſt abominations. This original luſt is productive of them all, James i. 14, 15. Which luſt, though it be in every man, *numerically*, different from that of others, yet it is one and the ſame *ſpecifically*, for ſort and kind, in all the children of Adam; even as the reaſonable ſoul, though every man hath his own ſoul, viz. a ſoul individually diſtinct from another man's, yet it is the ſame for kind in all men. So that whatever abominations are in the hearts and lives of the vileſt Sodomites, and the moſt profligate wretches under heaven; there is the ſame matter in thy heart out of which they were ſhaped and formed. In the depths of the heart they are conceived, and thence they crawl out of the eyes, hands, lips, and all the members, Mat. xv. 18, 19. "Thoſe things (ſaith Chriſt) which proceed "out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and defile a man. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, "fornications, thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies:" even ſuch monſters as would make a gracious heart tremble to behold. 'What are 'my luſts (ſaith one*) but ſo many toads ſpitting of venom, and 'ſpawning of poiſon; croaking in my judgment, creeping in my 'will, and crawling into my affections?' The apoſtle in 1 Cor. v. 1. tells us of a ſin, "not to be named;" ſo monſtrous, that nature itſelf ſtartles at it: even ſuch monſters are generated in the depths of the heart. Whence come evils? was a queſtion that much puzzled the philoſophers of old. Now here you may ſee whence they come, and where they are begotten.

REFLECTION.

And are there ſuch ſtrange abominations in the heart of man? Then how is he degenerated from his primitive perfection and glory! His ſtreams were once as clear as cryſtal, and the fountain of them pure, there was no unclean creature moving in them. What a ſtate-

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* Fuller's Meditations. p. 11.

ly fabric was the ſoul at firſt! And what holy inhabitants poſſeſſed the ſeveral rooms thereof! But now, as God ſpeaks of Idumea, Iſa. xxxiv. 11, "The line of confuſion is ſtreatched out upon it, and "the ſtones of emptineſs. The cormorant and bittern poſſeſs it; "the owl and the raven dwell in it." Yea, as Iſa. xiii. 21, 22. "The wild beaſts of the deſart lie there; it is full of doleful crea- "tures, the ſatyrs dance in it, and dragons cry in thoſe ſometimes "pleaſant places." O ſad change! how ſadly may we look back towards our firſt ſtate! and take up the words of Job, "O that I were "as in months paſt, as in the days of my youth; when the Almighty "was yet with me, when I put on righteouſneſs, and it clothed me, "when my glory was freſh in me," Job xxix 2, 4, 5.

Again, think, O my ſoul, what a miſerable condition the unregenerate abide in! Thus ſwarmed and over-run with helliſh luſts, under the dominion and vaſſalage of divers luſts, Tit. iii. 3. What a tumultuous ſea is ſuch a ſoul: how do theſe luſts rage within them! how do they conteſt and ſcuffle for the throne! and uſually take it by turns: for as all diſeaſes are contrary to health, yet ſome contrary to each other, ſo are luſts. Hence poor creatures are hurried on to different kinds of ſervitude, according to the nature of that imperious luſt that is in the throne; and, like the lunatic, Matth. xvii. are ſometimes caſt into the water, and ſometimes into the fire. Well might the prophet ſay, "The wicked is like a troubled ſea that cannot reſt," Iſa. vii. 20. They have no peace now in the ſervice of ſin, and leſs ſhall they have hereafter, when they receive the wages of ſin. "There "is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my God." They indeed cry *Peace, peace;* but my God doth not ſo. The laſt iſſue and reſult of this is eternal death; no ſooner is it delivered of its deceitful pleaſures, but preſently it falls in travail again, and brings forth death, Jam. i. 15.

Once more: and is the heart ſuch a ſea, abounding with monſtrous abominations? Then ſtand aſtoniſhed, O my ſoul, at that free grace which hath delivered thee from ſo ſad a condition; O fall down and kiſs the feet of mercy that moved ſo freely and ſeaſonably to thy reſcue? Let my heart be enlarged abundantly here. Lord, what am I, that I ſhould be taken, and others left? Reflect, O my ſoul, upon the conceptions and burſts of luſts in the days of vanity, which thou now bluſheſt to own. O what black imaginations, helliſh deſires, vile affections, are lodged there! Who made me to differ? or, how came I to be thus wonderfully ſeparated? Surely, it is by thy free-grace, and nothing elſe, that I am what I am; and by that grace I have eſcaped (to mine own aſtoniſhment) the corruption that is in the world through luſt. O that ever the holy God ſhould ſet his eyes on ſuch an one; or caſt a look of love towards me, in whom were legions of unclean luſts and abominations.

## THE POEM.

MY ſoul's the ſea, wherein, from day to day,
Sins like Leviathans do ſport and play.
Great maſter-luſts, with all the leſſer fry,
Therein increaſe, and ſtrangely multiply.
Yet ſtrange it is not, ſin ſo faſt ſhould breed,
Since with this nature I receiv'd the ſeed
And ſpawn of ev'ry ſpecies, which was ſhed
Into its caverns firſt, then nouriſhed
By its own native warmth; which like the ſun
Hath quick'ned them, and now abroad they come:
And like the frogs of Egypt creep and crawl
Into the cloſeſt rooms within my ſoul.
My fancy ſwarms, for there they friſk and play,
In dreams by night, and fooliſh toys by day.
My judgment's clouded by them, and my will
Perverted, every corner they do fill.
As locuſts ſeize on all that's freſh and green,
Unclothe the beauteous ſpring, and make it ſeem
Like drooping autumn; ſo my ſoul, that firſt
As Eden ſeem'd, now's like a ground that's curſt.
Lord purge my ſtreams, and kill thoſe luſts that lie
Within them; if they do not, I muſt die.

## CHAP. IV.

*Seas purge themſelves, and caſt their filth aſhore,*
*But graceleſs ſouls retain, and ſuck in more.*

### OBSERVATION.

SEAS are in a continual motion and agitation, they have their flux and reflux, by which they are kept from putrefaction: like a fountain it cleanſes itſelf, Iſa. lvii. 20. "It cannot reſt, but caſts up "mire and dirt;" whereas lakes and ponds, whoſe waters are ſtanding, and dead, corrupt and ſtink. And it is obſerved by ſeamen, that in the ſouthern parts of the world, where the ſea is more calm and ſettled, it is more corrupt and unfit for uſe; ſo is the ſea of Sodom, called the *dead ſea*.

### APPLICATION.

Thus do regenerate ſouls purify themſelves, and work out corruption that defiles them, they cannot ſuffer it to ſettle there, 1 John iii. 3. "He purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure." "Keepeth himſelf "that the wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John v. 18. ſcil. *tanctu*

*qualitativo*, with a qualitative touch, as the loadſtone toucheth iron, leaving an impreſſion of its nature behind it. They are doves delighting in cleanneſs, Iſa. xxxiii. 15. "He deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſion, he "ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, ſtoppeth his ears from "hearing blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil." See how all ſenſes and members are guarded againſt ſin: but it is quite contrary with the wicked; there is no principle of holineſs in them to oppoſe or expel corruption. It lies in their hearts as mud in a lake or well, which ſettles and corrupts more and more. Hence Ezek. xlvii. 11. their hearts are compared to miry or marſhy places, which cannot be healed, but are given to ſalt: the meaning is, that the pureſt ſtreams of the goſpel, which cleanſe others, make them worſe than before, as abundance of rain will a miry place. The reaſon is, becauſe it meets with an obſtacle in their ſouls, ſo that it cannot run through them and be glorified, as it doth in gracious ſouls. All the means and endeavours uſed to cleanſe them are in vain; all the grace of God they receive in vain, "they hold faſt deceit, they refuſe to "let it go," Jer. viii. 5. Sin is not in them as floating weeds upon the ſea, which it ſtrives to expel and purge out, but as ſpots in the leopard's ſkin, Jer. xiii. 21. or letters faſhioned and engraven in the very ſubſtance of marble or braſs with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond, Jer. xvii. 1. Or as ivy in an old wall, that hath gotten root in its very entrails. "Wickedneſs is ſweet to their mouths, they roll "it under their tongues," Job xx. 12. No threats nor promiſes can divorce them from it.

REFLECTION.

Lord! this is the very frame of my heart, may the graceleſs ſoul ſay. My corruptions quietly ſettle in me, my heart labours not againſt them: I am a ſtranger to that conflict which is daily maintained in all the faculties of the regenerate ſoul. Glorified ſouls have no ſuch conflict, becauſe grace in them ſtands alone, and is perfectly triumphant over all its oppoſites; and graceleſs ſouls can have no ſuch conflict, becauſe in them corruption ſtands alone, and hath no other principle to make oppoſition to it. And this is my caſe, O Lord! I am full of vain hopes indeed, but had I a living and well-grounded hope to dwell for ever with ſo holy a God, I could not but be daily purifying myſelf. But O! what will the end of this be? I have cauſe to tremble at that laſt and dreadfuleſt curſe in the book of God, Rev. xxii. 11. "Let "him that is filthy be filthy ſtill." Is it not as much as if God ſhould ſay, Let them alone, I will ſpend no more rods upon them, no more means ſhall be uſed about them; but I will reckon with them for all together in another world? O my ſoul! what a diſmal reckoning will that be! Ponder with thyſelf in the mean while thoſe terrible and awakening texts, that, if poſſible, this fatal iſſue may be prevented. See Iſa. i. 5. Hoſ. iv. 14. Jer. vi. 29, 30. Heb. vi. 8.

## THE POEM.

MY heart's no fountain, but a ſtanding lake
Of putrid waters; if therein I rake,
By ſerious ſearch, O! what a noiſome ſmell,
Like exhalations riſing out of hell;
The ſtinking waters pump'd up from the hold,
Are as perfumes to ſeamen: but my ſoul
Upon the ſame account that they are glad,
(Its long continuance there) is therefore ſad.
The ſcripture ſaith, "No ſoul God's face ſhall ſee,"
Till from ſuch filthy luſts it cleanſed be.
Yet though unclean, it may that way be rid,
As Herculus the Augean ſtable did.
Lord turn into my ſoul that cleanſing blood,
Which from my Saviour's ſide flow'd as a flood.
Flow, ſacred fountain, brim my banks; and flow
Till you have made my ſoul as white as ſnow.

## CHAP. V.

*Seamen foreſee a danger, and prepare;*
*Yet few of greater dangers are aware.*

### OBSERVATION.

HOW watchful and quick-ſighted are ſeamen to prevent dangers! if the wind die away, and then freſh up ſoutherly: or if they ſee the ſky hazy, they provide for a ſtorm: if by the proſpective glaſs they know a pyrate at a great diſtance, they clear the gun-room, prepare for fight, and bear up, if able to deal with him; if not, they keep cloſe by the wind, make all the ſail they can, and bear away. If they ſuppoſe themſelves, by their reckoning, near land, how often do they ſound? And if upon a coaſt with which they are unacquainted, how careful are they to get a pilot that knows, and is acquainted with it?

### APPLICATION.

Thus watchful and ſuſpicious ought we to be in ſpiritual concernments. We ſhould ſtudy, and be acquainted with Satan's wiles and policy. The apoſtle takes it for granted, that Chriſtians are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Cor. ii. 11. "The ſerpent's eye (as one "ſaith) would do well in the dove's head." The devil is a cunning pyrate, he puts out falſe colours, and ordinarily comes up to the Chriſtian in the diſguiſe of a friend.

O the manifold depths and ſtratagems of Satan to deſtroy ſouls!

though he have no wiſdom to do himſelf good, yet he hath policy enough to do us miſchief. He lies in ambuſh behind our lawful comforts and employments; yet, for the generality of men, how ſupine and careleſs are they, ſuſpecting no danger? Their ſouls, like Laiſh, dwell careleſsly, their ſenſes ungarded: O what an eaſy prize, and conqueſt, doth the devil make of them!

Indeed, if it were with us as with Adam in innocency, or as it was with Chriſt in the days of his fleſh (who by reaſon of that overflowing fulneſs of grace that dwelt in him, the purity of his perſon, and the hypoſtatical union, was ſecured from the danger of all temptations) the caſe then were otherwiſe; but we have a traitor within, James i. 14, 15. as well as a tempter without: 1 Pet. v. 8. "Our "adverſary the devil goes about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he "may devour:" And, like the beaſts of the foreſts, poor ſouls lie down before him, and become his prey. All the ſagacity, wit, policy, and foreſight of ſome men, is ſummoned in to ſerve their bodies, and ſecure their fleſhly enjoyments.

REFLECTION.

Lord! how doth the care, wiſdom, and vigilance of men in temporal and external things, condemn my careleſſneſs in the deep and dear concernments of my precious ſoul! what care and labour is there to ſecure a periſhing life, liberty, or treaſure! when was I thus ſolicitous for my ſoul, though its value be ineſtimable, and its danger far greater? Self-preſervation is one of the deepeſt principles in nature. There is not the pooreſt worm, or fly, but will ſhun danger, if it can: yet I am ſo far from ſhunning thoſe dangers to which my ſoul lies continually expoſed, that I often run it upon temptations, and voluntarily expoſe it to its enemies. I ſee, Lord how watchful, jealous, and labourious thy people are; what prayers, tears, and groans, ſearching of heart, mortification of luſts, guarding of ſenſes; and all accounted too little by them Have not I a ſoul to ſave or loſe eternally, as well as they? Yet I cannot deny one fleſhly luſt, nor withſtand one temptation. O how I am convinced and condemned, not only by other's care and vigilance, but my own too, in leſſer and lower matters?

## THE POEM.

I AM the ſhip, whoſe bills of lading come
To more than man's or angel's art can ſum,
Rich fraught with mercies, on the ocean, now
I float, the dang'rous ocean I do plow.
Storms riſe, rocks threaten, and in every creek
Pyrates and pickeroons their prizes ſeek.
My ſoul ſhould watch, look out, and uſe its glaſs,
Prevent ſurpriſals timely; but, alas!

Temptations give it chace, 'its grappled ſure,
And boarded, whilſt it thinks itſelf ſecure.
It ſleeps, like Jonah, in the dreadful ſtorm,
Altho' it's caſe be dang'rous, and forlorn.
Lord, rouze my drowſy ſoul, leſt it ſhould knock,
And ſplit itſelf upon ſome dang'rous rock.
If it of faith and conſcience ſhipwreck make,
I am undone for ever; ſoul, awake!
Till thou arrive in heav'n, watch, and fear;
Thou may'ſt not ſay, till then, the coaſt is clear.

## CHAP. VI.

*How ſmall a matter turns a ſhip about*
*Yet we, againſt our conſcience, ſtand it out.*

### OBSERVATION.

IT is juſt matter of admiration, to ſee ſo great a body as a ſhip is, and when under ſail too, before a freſh and ſtrong wind, by which it is carried, as the clouds, with marvellous force and ſpeed, yet to be commanded with eaſe, by ſo ſmall a thing as the helm is. The ſcripture takes notice of it as a matter worthy of our conſideration. Jam. iii. 4. "Behold alſo the ſhips, which though they be "great, and driven of fierce winds; yet they are turned about with "a ſmall helm, whitherſoever the governor liſteth." Yea, * Ariſtotle himſelf, that eagle-eyed philoſopher, could not give a reaſon of it, but looked upon it as a very marvellous and wonderful thing.

### APPLICATION.

To the ſame uſe and office has God deſigned conſcience in man, which being rectified and regulated by the word and Spirit of God, is to ſteer and order his whole converſation. Conſcience is as the oracle of God, the judge and determiner of our actions, whether they be good or evil? And it lays the ſtrongeſt obligation upon the creature to obey its dictates, that is imaginable; for it binds under the reaſon and conſideration of the moſt abſolute and ſovereign will of the great God. So that as often as conſcience from the word convinceth us of any ſin or duty, it lays ſuch a bond upon us to obey it, as no power under heaven can relax or diſpenſe with. Angels cannot do it, much leſs man; for that would be to exalt themſelves above God. Now therefore it is an high and dreadful way of ſinning, to oppoſe and rebel againſt conſcience, when it convinces of ſin and duty. Conſcience ſometimes reaſons it out with men, and ſhews them the

* Ariſtot. Secund. Μηχανικων, c. 5.

neceſſity of changing their way and courſe; arguing it from the cleareſt and moſt allowed maxims of right reaſon, as well as from the indiſputable ſovereignty of God.

As for inſtance: it convinceth their very reaſon that things of eternal duration are infinitely to be preferred to all momentary and periſhing things, Rom. viii. 18. Heb. xi. 26. and it is our duty to chuſe them, and make all ſecular and temporary concernments to ſtand aſide, and give place to them. Yet though men be convinced of this, their ſtubborn will ſtands out, and will not yield up itſelf to the conviction.

Further, It argues from this acknowledged truth, that all the delight and pleaſures in this world are but a miſerable portion, and that it is the higheſt folly to adventure an immortal ſoul for them, Luke ix. 15. Alas! what remembrance is there of them in hell? They are as the waters that paſs away. What have they left, of all their mirth and jollity, but a tormenting ſting? It convinceth them clearly, alſo, that in matters of deep concernment it is an high point of wiſdom, to apprehend and improve the right ſeaſons and opportunities of them, Prov. x. 5. "He that gathers in ſummer is a wiſe ſon." Eccleſ. viii. 5. "A wiſe man's heart diſcerns both time and judgment. "There is a ſeaſon to every purpoſe," Eccleſ. iii. 1. viz. a nick of time, an happy juncture, when if a man ſtrikes in, he doth his work effectually, and with much facility: ſuch ſeaſons conſcience convinceth the ſoul of, and often whiſpers thus in its ear: Now, ſoul, ſtrike in, cloſe with this motion of the Spirit, and be happy for ever; thou mayeſt never have ſuch a gale for heaven any more. Now, though theſe be allowed maxims of reaſon, and conſcience enforce them ſtrongly on the ſoul, yet cannot it prevail; the proud, ſtubborn will rebels, and will not be guided by it. See Eph. ii. 3. Job xxxiv. 37. Iſa. xlvi. 12. Ezek. ii. 4. Jer. xliv. 16.

REFLECTION.

Ah! Lord, ſuch an heart have I had before thee; thus obſtinate, thus rebellious, ſo uncontroulable by conſcience. Many a time hath conſcience thus whiſpered in mine ear, many a time hath it ſtood in my way, as the angel did in Balaam's, or the cherubims that kept the way of the tree of life with flaming ſwords turning every way. Thus hath it ſtood to oppoſe me in the way of my luſts. How often hath it calmly debated the caſe with me alone? and how ſweetly hath it expoſtulated with me? How clearly hath it convinced of ſin, danger, duty, with ſtrong demonſtration? How terrible hath it menaced my ſoul, and ſet the point of the threatening at my very breaſt? And yet my head-ſtrong affections will not be remanded by it. I have obeyed the voice of every luſt and temptation, Tit. iii. 3. but conſcience hath loſt its authority with me. Ah Lord! Lord! what a ſad condition am I in, both in reſpect of ſin and miſery? My ſin receives dreadful aggravations, for rebellion and preſumption are hereby added to it.

I have violated the ſtrongeſt bonds that ever were laid upon a creature. If my conſcience had not thus convinced and warned, the ſin had not been ſo great and crimſon-coloured, Jam. iv. 17. Ah! this is to ſin with an high hand, Numb. xv. 30. to come near to the great and unpardonable tranſgreſſion, Pſalm xix. 13. O how dreadful a way of ſinning is this, with opened eyes! and as my ſin is thus out of meaſure ſinful, ſo my puniſhment will be out of meaſure dreadful, if I perſiſt in this rebellion. Lord! thou haſt ſaid, Such ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes, Luke xii. 48 yea, Lord, and if ever my conſcience, which by rebellion is now grown ſilent, ſhould be in judgment awakened in this life; O! what an hell ſhould I have within me! how would it thunder and roar upon me, and ſurround me with terrors?

Thy word aſſures me, that no length of time can wear out of its memory what I have done, Gen. xlii. 21. no violence or force can ſuppreſs it, Mat. xxvii. 4. no greatneſs of power can ſtifle it; it will take the mightieſt monarch by the throat, Exod. x. 16. Dan. v. 6. no muſic, pleaſures, or delights, can charm it, Job xx. 22. O conſcience! thou art the ſweeteſt friend, or the dreadfuleſt enemy in the world; thy conſolations are incomparably ſweet, and thy terrors inſupportable. Ah! let me ſtand it out no longer againſt conſcience; the very ſhip in which I ſail is a confutation of my madneſs, that ruſhes greedily into ſin againſt both reaſon and conſcience, and will not be commanded by it; ſurely, O my ſoul, this will be bitterneſs in the end.

## THE POEM.

A SHIP of greateſt burthen will obey
The rudder; he that ſits at helm, may ſway
And guide its motion: If the pilot pleaſe,
The ſhip bears up, againſt both wind and ſeas.
My ſoul's the ſhip, affections are its ſails,
Conſcience the rudder. Ah! but Lord, what ails
My naughty heart, to ſhuffle in and out,
When its convictions bid it tack about?
Temptations blow a counter blaſt, and drive
The veſſel where they pleaſe, tho' conſcience ſtrive.
And by its ſtrong perſuaſions it would force
My ſtubborn will to ſteer another courſe.
Lord, if I run this courſe, thy word doth tell
How quickly I muſt needs arrive at hell.
Then rectify my conſcience, change my will;
Fan in thy pleaſant gales, my God, and fill
All my affections, and let nothing carry
My ſoul from its due courſe, or make it vary;
Then if the pilot's work thou wouldſt perform,
I ſhould bear bravely up againſt a ſtorm.

## CHAP. VII.

*Thro' many fears and dangers ſeamen run,*
*Yet all's forgotten when they do return.*

### OBSERVATION.

WE have an elegant and lively deſcription of their fears and dangers, Pſal. cvii. 25, 26, 27. "He commandeth and "raiſeth the ſtormy winds, which lift up the waves thereof: "they mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their "ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble; they reel to and fro, they ſtag- "ger like a drunken man; they are at their wits end." Or, as it is in the Hebrew, "All wiſdom is ſwallowed up." Suitable to which is that of the poet*.

"The pilot knows not what to chuſe, or flee;
"Art ſtands amaz'd in ambiguity."

O what a ſtrange and miraculous deliverance have many ſeamen had? How often have they yielded themſelves for dead men, and verily thought the next ſea would have ſwallowed them up? How earneſtly then do they cry for mercy? and, like the Cymbrians, can pray in a ſtorm, though they regard it not at other times, Pſal. cvii. 28. Jonah i. 5, 6.

### APPLICATION.

Theſe dreadful ſtorms do at once diſcover to us the mighty power of God in raiſing them, and the abundant goodneſs of God in preſerving poor creatures in them.

1. The power of God is graciouſly manifeſted in raiſing them; the wind is one of the Lord's wonders, Pſal. cvii. 24, 25. "They "that go down to the ſea, ſee the works of the Lord, and his [won- "ders] in the deep; for he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy "winds." Yea, ver. 18. God appropriates it as a peculiar work of his; "He cauſeth his [wind to blow]." Hence he is ſaid in ſcripture "to bring them forth out of his treaſury," Pſal. cxxxvii. 7. there they are locked up, and reſerved; not a guſt can break forth till he command and call for it to go and execute his pleaſure: Yea, he is ſaid to "hold them in his fiſt," Prov. xxx. 4. What is more incapable of holding than the wind? yet God holds it; although it be a ſtrong and terrible creature, he controls and rules it: yea, the ſcripture ſets forth God, 'as riding upon the wings of the wind," Pſal. xviii. 10. It is a borrowed ſpeech from the manner of men, who when they would ſhew their pomp and greatneſs, ride upon ſome ſtately

* *Rector in incerto eſt: nec quid fugiatve petatve*
*Invenit; ambiguis ars ſtupet ipſa malis.* Ovid.

horſe, or chariot; ſo the Lord, to manifeſt the greatneſs of his power, rides upon the wings of the wind, and will be admired in ſo terrible a creature.

And no leſs of his glorious power appears in remanding them, than in raiſing them. The heathens aſcribe this power to their god Æolus, but we know this is the royalty and ſole prerogative of the true God who made heaven and earth; it is he that "makes the ſtorm a "calm," Pſal. cvii. 29. and it is he that ſhifts and changes them from point to point, as he pleaſeth; for he hath appointed them their circuits, Eccleſ. i. 6. "The wind goeth towards the ſouth, and turn-"eth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and re-"turneth again according to its circuits."

2. And as we ſhould adore his power in the winds, ſo ought we to admire his goodneſs in preſerving men in the height of all their fury and violence. O what a marvellous work of God is here! that men ſhould be kept in a poor weak veſſel, upon the wild and ſtormy ocean, where the wind hath its full ſtroke upon them, and they are driven before it, as a wreck upon the ſeas; yet, I ſay, that God ſhould preſerve you there, is a work of infinite goodneſs and power. That thoſe winds which do rend the very earth, mountains, and rocks, 1 Kings xix. 11. "Break the cedars, yea, the cedars of Lebanon, "ſhake the wilderneſs, and make the hinds to calve," Pſal. xxix. 5, 8, 9. which naturaliſts ſay bring forth with greateſt difficulty; ſurely your preſervation, in ſuch tempeſts, is an aſtoniſhing work of mercy. O how dreadful is this creature, the wind, ſometimes to you! and how doth it make your hearts ſhake within you? If but a plank ſpring, or a bolt give way, you are all loſt. Sometimes the Lord, for the magnifying of the riches of his goodneſs upon you, drives you to ſuch exigencies, that, as Paul ſpeaks, in a like caſe, Acts xxvii. 20. "All hope of being ſaved is taken away;" nothing but death before your eyes. The Lord commands a wind out of his treaſury, bids it go and lift up the terrible waves, lock you in upon the ſhore, and drive you upon the rocks, ſo that no art can ſave you; and then ſends you a piece of wreck, or ſome other means, to land you ſafe: And all this to give you an experiment of his goodneſs and pity, that you may learn to fear that God in whoſe hand your ſoul and breath are.

And it may be, for the preſent, your hearts are much affected; conſcience works ſtrongly, it ſmites you for ſins formerly committed, ſuch and ſuch counſels of miniſters, or relations ſlighted. Now, ſaith conſcience, God is come in this ſtorm to reckon with thee for theſe things. But, alas! all this is but a morning dew; no ſooner is that ſtorm without allayed, but all is quiet within too. How little of the goodneſs of God abides kindly, and effectually upon the heart?

REFLECTION.

How often hath this glorious power and goodneſs of God paſſed before me in dreadful ſtorms and tempeſts at ſea? He hath uttered his voice in theſe ſtormy winds, and ſpoken in a terrible manner by them; yet how little have I been affected with it? "The Lord hath "his way in the whirlwind, and in the ſtorm," Nah. i. 3. To ſome he hath walked in ways of judgment and wrath, ſending them down in a moment to hell: but to me in a way of forbearance and mercy. Ah! how often have I been upon the very brink of eternity! had not God ſhifted or allayed the wind in a moment, I had gone down into hell. What workings of conſcience were at preſent upon me? And what terrible apprehenſions had I then of my eternal condition? What vows did I make in that diſtreſs? And how earneſtly did I then beg for mercy? But, Lord, though thy vows are upon me, yet have I been the ſame; yea, added to, and filled up the meaſure of my ſins. Neither the bonds of mercy thou haſt laid upon me, nor the ſacred and ſolemn vows I have laid upon myſelf, could reſtrain me from thoſe ways of iniquity, which then appeared ſo dreadful to me.

Ah! Lord, what an heart have I? What love, pity, and goodneſs have I ſinned againſt? If God had but reſpited judgment ſo long, what a mercy were it. Sure I am, the damned would account it ſo; but to give me ſuch a ſpace to repent, ah! what an invaluable mercy is this? And do I thus requite the Lord, Deut. xxxii. 6. and pervert and abuſe his goodneſs thus? Surely, O my ſoul, if this be the fruit of all thy preſervations, they are rather reſervations to ſome farther and ſorer judgments. How dreadfully will juſtice at laſt avenge the quarrel of abuſed mercy, Joſh. xxiv. 20. How grievouſly did God take it from the Iſraelites, that they provoked him at the ſea, even at the red-ſea? Pſal. cvi. 7. where God had wrought their deliverance in ſuch a miraculous way. Even thus have I ſinned after the ſimilitude of their tranſgreſſions; not only againſt the laws of God, but againſt the love of God. In the laſt ſtorm he ſhot off his warning-piece, in the next he may diſcharge his murdering-piece againſt my ſoul and body. O my ſoul! hath he given thee "ſuch "deliverances as theſe, and dareſt thou again break his command-"ments," Ezra ix. 13, 14. O let me pay the vows that my lips have uttered in my diſtreſs, leſt the Lord recover his glory from me in a way of judgment.

## THE POEM.

THE ſhip that now ſails trim before a wind,
E'er the deſired port it gains, may find
A tedious paſſage; gentle gales a while
Do fill its ſails, the flatt'ring ſeas do ſmile,
The face of heav'n is bright on ev'ry ſide
The wanton porpoiſe tumbles on the tide.

Into their cabins now the ſeamen go,
And then turn out again with—*What cheer, ho?*
All on a ſudden darken'd are the ſkies,
The lamp of heav'n obſcur'd, the winds do riſe;
Waves ſwell like mountains: Now their courage flags,
The maſts are crack'd, the canvas torn to rags,
The veſſel works for life; anon one cries,
*The mainmaſt's gone by th' board;* another plies
The pump, until a third does ſtrike them blank,
With—*Sirs, prepare for death, we've ſprung a plank.*
Now to their knees they go, and on this wiſe
They beg for mercy with their loudeſt cries:
Lord, ſave us but this once, and thou ſhalt ſee
What perſons for the future we will be:
Our former time's miſ-ſpent, but, with a vow,
We will engage, if thou wilt ſave us now,
To mend what is amiſs. The gracious Lord,
Inclin'd to pity, takes them at their word;
The winds into their treaſures he doth call,
Rebukes the ſtormy ſea, and brings them all
To their deſired haven; once a ſhore,
And then their vows are ne'er remember'd more.
Thus ſouls are ſhipwreck'd, tho' the bodies live,
Unleſs in time thou true repentance give.

## CHAP. VIII.

*The navigator ſhifts his ſails to take*
*All winds but that which for his ſoul doth make.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE mariner wants no ſkill and wiſdom to improve ſeveral winds, and make them ſerviceable to his end; a bare ſide wind, by his ſkill in ſhifting and managing the ſails, will ſerve his turn: He will not loſe the advantage of one breath or gale that may be uſeful to him. I have many times wondered to ſee two ſhips ſailing in a direct counter motion, by one and the ſame wind: Their ſkill and wiſdom herein is admirable.

### APPLICATION.

Thus prudent and ſkilful are men in ſecular and lower matters, and yet how ignorant and unſkilful in the great and everlaſting affairs of their ſouls! All their invention, judgment, wit, and memory, ſeem to be preſſed for the ſervice of the fleſh. They can learn an art quickly, and arrive to a great deal of exactneſs in it; but in ſoul-

matters no knowledge at all. They can underſtand the Equator, Meridian, and Horizon; by the firſt they can tell the latitude of any place, ſouth, or north, meaſuring it by the degrees in the Meridian; by the ſecond they can tell you the longitude of a place, eaſt and weſt, from the Meridian, meaſuring it by the degrees of the Equator; and by the third they can diſcern the divers riſings and ſettings of the ſtars. And ſo in other arts and ſciences we find men endowed with rare abilities and ſingular ſagacity. Some have piercing apprehenſions, ſolid judgments, ſtupendous memories, rare invention, and excellent elocution; but put them upon any ſpiritual, ſupernatural matter, and the weakeſt Chriſtian, even a babe in Chriſt, ſhall excel them therein, and give a far better account of regeneration, the work of grace, the life of faith, than theſe can. 1 Cor. i. 20. "Not many wiſe men "after the fleſh, &c. But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of this "world," &c.

REFLECTION.

How inexcuſable then art thou, O my ſoul! and how mute and confounded muſt thou needs ſtand before the bar of God in that great day? Thou haſt a talent of natural parts committed to thee, but which way have they been improved? I had an underſtanding indeed, but it was not ſanctified; a memory, but it was like a ſieve, that let go the corn, and retained nothing but huſks and chaff; wit and invention, but, alas! none to do myſelf good. Ah! how will theſe riſe in judgment againſt me, and ſtop my mouth? What account ſhall I give for them in that day?

Again, are men (otherwiſe prudent and ſkilful) ſuch ſots and fools in ſpiritual things? Then let the poor, weak Chriſtian, whoſe natural parts are blunt and dull, admire the riches of God's free grace to him. O what an aſtoniſhing conſideration is this! that God ſhould paſs by men of the profoundeſt natural parts, and chuſe me, even poor me, whoſe natural faculties and endowments, compared with theirs, are but as lead to gold? Thus under the law he paſſed by the lion and eagle, and choſe the lamb and dove. O how ſhould it make me to advance grace, as Chriſt doth upon the ſame account, Mat. xi. 25. "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou "haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and revealed them to babes." And let it ever be an humbling conſideration to me; for who made me to differ? Is not this one principal thing God aims at, in calling ſuch as I am, that boaſting may be excluded, and himſelf alone exalted?

THE POEM.

ONE thing doth very much affect my mind,
To ſee the ſeaman huſband ev'ry wind:
With excellent art he ſhifts the ſails, and knows
How to improve the faireſt wind that blows.

If a direct or fore right gale he want,
A ſide wind ſerves his turn, tho' ne'er ſo ſcant.
And will not this one day in judgment riſe
Againſt your ſouls? Ah! can you be ſo wiſe
In ſmall matters; what, and yet not know
How to improve freſh gales of grace that blow?
Faſt moor'd in ſin your wind-bound ſouls can lie,
And let theſe precious gales riſe, blow, and die.
Sometimes on your affections you may feel
Such gracious breathings: Ah, but hearts of ſteel,
They move you not, nor cauſe you to relent;
Though able, like Elijah's wind, to rent
The rocks aſunder: If you do not prize
Thoſe breathings, other winds will ſhortly riſe,
And from another quarter; thoſe once gone,
Then next look out for an Euroclydon.
A dreadful ſtorm: How ſoon, no man can tell;
But when it comes, 'twill blow ſuch ſouls to hell.

## CHAP. IX.

*If ſeamen loſe a gale, there they may lie;*
*The ſoul, when once becalm'd in ſin, may die.*

### OBSERVATION.

SEAMEN are very watchful to take their opportunity of wind and tide, and it much concerns them ſo to be; the neglect of a few hours, ſometimes loſes them their paſſage, and proves a great detriment to them. They know the wind is an uncertain, variable thing; they muſt take it when they may: they are unwilling to loſe one ſlow or breath, that may be ſerviceable to them. If a proſperous gale offers, and they not ready, it repents them to loſe it, as much as it would repent us to ſee a veſſel of good wine or beer, tapped and run to waſte.

### APPLICATION.

There are alſo ſeaſons and gales of grace for our ſouls, golden opportunities of ſalvation afforded to men, the neglect of which proves the loſs and ruin of ſouls. God hath given unto man a day of viſitation, which he hath limited, Heb. iv. 7. and keeps an exact account of every year, month, and day, that we have enjoyed it, Luke xiii. 7. Jer. xxv. 3. Luke xix. 42. The longeſt date of it can but be the time of this life; this is our day to work in, Job ix. 4. and upon this ſmall wire the weight of eternity hangs. But ſometimes the ſeaſon of grace is ended, before the night of death comes; the accepted time is gone, men frequently outlive it, Luke xix. 44. 2 Cor.

vi. 2. Or, if the outward means of ſalvation be continued, yet the Spirit many times withdraws from thoſe means, and ceaſes any more to ſtrive with men; and then the bleſſing, power, and efficacy is gone from them, and inſtead thereof a curſe ſeizeth the ſoul, Heb. vi. 7, 8. and Jer. vi. 29.

Therefore it is a matter of high importance to our ſouls to apprehend theſe ſeaſons. How pathetically doth Chriſt bewail Jeruſalem upon this account! Luke xix. 42. "O that thou hadſt known, at "leaſt in this thy day, the things of thy peace! but now they are "hid from thine eyes." If a company of ſeamen are ſet aſhore upon ſome remote, uninhabited iſland, with this advice, to be aboard again exactly at ſuch an hour, elſe they muſt be left behind; how doth it concern them to be punctual to their time? The lives of thoſe men depend upon a quarter of an hour. Many a ſoul hath periſhed eternally, the goſpel leaving them behind in their ſins, becauſe they knew not the time of their viſitation.

REFLECTION.

What golden ſeaſons for ſalvation haſt thou enjoyed, O my ſoul? what halcyon days of goſpel-light and grace haſt thou had? How have the precious gales of grace blown to no purpoſe upon thee! and the Spirit waited and ſtriven with thee in vain? "The kingdom of "heaven, (being opened in the goſpel-diſpenſation) hath ſuffered "violence." Multitudes have been preſſing into it in my days, and I myſelf have ſometimes been almoſt perſuaded, and not far from the kingdom of God: I have gone as far as conviction for ſin and miſery, yea, I have been carried by the power of the goſpel to reſolve and purpoſe to turn to God, and become a new creature; but ſin hath been too ſubtle and deceitful for me: I ſee, my reſolutions were but as an early cloud or morning dew; and now my heart is cold and dead again, ſettled upon its lees. Ah! I have cauſe to fear and tremble, leſt God hath left me under that curſe, Rev. xx. 11. "Let him "that is filthy be filthy ſtill." I fear I am become as that miry place, Ezek. xlvii. 11. that ſhall not be healed by the ſtreams of the goſpel, but *given to ſalt*, and curſed into perpetual barrenneſs. Ah Lord! wilt thou leave me ſo? and ſhall thy Spirit ſtrive no more with me? Then it had been good for me that I had never been born. Ah! if I have trifled out this ſeaſon, and irrecoverably loſt it, then I may take up that lamentation, Jer. viii. 20. and ſay, "My "harveſt is paſt, my ſummer is ended, and I am not ſaved."

Every creature knows its time, even the turtle, crane, and ſwallow, know the time of their coming, Jer. viii. 7. How bruti ſh am I, that have not known the time of my viſitation! O thou that art the Lord of life and time, command one gracious ſeaſon more for me, and make it effectual to me, before I go hence, and be ſeen no more!

THE POEM.

A Freſh and whiſking gale preſents to day,
But now the ſhip's not ready; winds muſt ſtay,

And wait the ſeaman's leiſure. Well, to-morrow
They will put out; but then, unto their ſorrow,
That wind is ſpent, and by that means they gain
Perchance a month's repentance, if not twain.
At laſt another offers, now they're gone;
But ere they gain their port, the market's done.
For ev'ry work and purpoſe under heav'n,
A proper time and ſeaſon God hath giv'n.
The fowls of heaven, ſwallow, turtle, crane,
Do apprehend it, and put us to ſhame.
Man hath his ſeaſon too, but that miſ-ſpent,
There's time enough his folly to repent.
Eternity's before him, but therein
No more ſuch golden hours as theſe have been:
When theſe are paſs'd away, then you ſhall find
That proverb true,—*Occaſion's bald behind.*
Delays are dang'rous, ſee that you diſcern
Your proper ſeaſons: O that you would learn
This wiſdom from thoſe fools that come too late
With fruitleſs cries, when Chriſt hath ſhut the gate.

## CHAP. X.

*By navigation one place ſtores another,*
*And by communion we muſt help each other.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE moſt wiſe God hath ſo diſpenſed his bounty to the ſeveral nations of the world, that one ſtanding in need of another's commodities, there might be a ſociable commerce and traffick maintained amongſt them all, and all combining in a common league, may, by the help of navigation, exhibit mutual ſuccours to each other. The ſtaple commodities proper to each country, I find expreſſed by the poet, Bart. Coll.

Hence comes our ſugars from Canary iſles;
From Candy currants, muſkadels, and oils;
From the Molucco's, ſpices; balſamum,
From Egypt; odours from Arabia come;
From India, gums, rich drugs, and ivory;
From Syria, mummy; black, red ebony,
From burning Chus; from Peru, pearl and gold;
From Ruſſia, furs, to keep the rich from cold;
From Florence, ſilks; from Spain, fruit, ſaffron, ſacks;
From Denmark, amber, cordage, firs, and flax;

From Holland, hops; horſe from the banks of Rhine;
From France and Italy the choiceſt wine;
From England, wool; all lands as God diſtributes,
To the world's treaſure pay their ſundry tributes.

APPLICATION.

Thus hath God diſtributed the more rich and precious gifts and graces of his Spirit among his people; ſome excelling in one grace, ſome in another, though every grace, in ſome degree, be in them all; even as in *nature*, though there be all the faculties in all, yet ſome faculties are in ſome more lively and vigorous than in others; ſame have a more vigorous eye, others a more ready ear, others a more voluble tongue; ſo it is in *ſpirituals*. Abraham excelled in *faith*, Job in *patience*, John in *love*. Theſe were their peculiar excellencies. All the elect veſſels are not of one quantity; yet even thoſe that excel others in ſome particular grace, come ſhort in other reſpects of thoſe they ſo excelled in the former, and may be much improved by converſe with ſuch as in ſome reſpects are much below them. The ſolid, wiſe, and judicious Chriſtian may want that livelineſs of affections and tenderneſs of heart that appear in the weak; and one that excels in gifts and utterance may learn humility from the very babes in Chriſt.

And one principal reaſon of this different diſtribution is to maintain fellowſhip among them all, 1 Cor. xii. 21: "The head cannot ſay to "the feet, I have no need of you." As in a family where there is much buſineſs to be done, even the little children bear a part, according to their ſtrength, Jer. vii. 18. "The children gather wood, the "fathers kindle the fire, the women knead the dough." So in the family of Chriſt, the weakeſt Chriſtian is ſerviceable to the ſtrong.

There be precious treaſures in theſe earthen veſſels, for which we ſhould trade by mutual communion. The preciouſneſs of the treaſure ſhould draw out our deſires and endeavours after it; and the conſideration of the brittleneſs of thoſe veſſels in which they are kept, ſhould cauſe us to be the more expeditious in our trading with them, and make the quicker returns. For when thoſe veſſels (I mean bodies of the ſaints) are broken by death, there is no more to be gotten out of them. That treaſure of grace which made them ſuch profitable, pleaſant, and deſirable companions on earth, then aſcends with them into heaven, where every grace receives its adoleſcence and perfection: and then, though they be ten thouſand times more excellent and delightful than ever they were on earth, yet we can have no more communion with them till we come to glory ourſelves. Now therefore it behoves us to be enriching ourſelves by communication of what God hath dropt into us, and improvement of them, as one well notes*. We ſhould do by ſaints, as we uſe to do by ſome choice book lent us for a few days, we ſhould fix in our memories, or tranſ-

* Mr Gurnal.

cribe all the choice notions we meet with in it, that they may be our own when the book is called for, and we can have it no longer by us.

REFLECTION.

Lord, how ſhort do I come of my duty in communicating to, or receiving good by others! My ſoul is either empty and barren, or if there be any treaſure in it, yet it is but as a treaſure locked up in ſome cheſt, whoſe key is loſt, when it ſhould be opened for the uſe of others. Ah Lord! I have ſinned greatly, not only by vain words, but ſinful ſilence. I have been of little uſe in the world.

How little alſo have I gotten by communion with others? Some, it may be, that are of my own ſize, or judgment, or that I am otherwiſe obliged to, I can delight to converſe with: but O, where is that largeneſs of heart and general delight I ſhould have to, and in all thy people? How many of my old dear acquaintance are now in heaven, whoſe tongues were as *choice ſilver*, while they were here, Prov. x. 20. And bleſſed ſouls! how communicative were they of what thou gaveſt them? O what an improvement had I made of my talent this way, had I been diligent! Lord pardon my neglect of thoſe ſweet and bleſſed advantages. O let all my delight be in thy ſaints, who are the excellent of the earth. Let me never go out of their company, without an heart more warmed, quickened, and enlarged, than when I came amongſt them.

THE POEM.

TO ſev'ral nations God doth ſo diſtribute
His bounty, that each one muſt pay a tribute
Unto each other. Europe cannot vaunt,
And ſay, Of Africa I have no want.
America and Aſia need not ſtrive,
Which of itſelf can beſt ſubſiſt and live.
Each country's want, in ſomething, doth maintain
Commerce betwixt them all. Such is the aim
And end of God, who doth diſpenſe and give
More grace to ſome, their brethren to relieve.
This makes the ſun ten thouſand times more bright,
Becauſe it is diffuſive of its light;
Its beams are gilded glorioufly; but then
This property doth gild them o'er again.
Should ſun, moon, ſtars, impropriate all their light,
What diſmal darkneſs would the world benight?
On this account men hate the vermin brood,
Becauſe they take in much, but do no good.
What harm, if I at yours my candle light?
Except thereby I make your room more bright.
He that by pumping ſucks and draws the ſpring,
New ſtreams, and ſweeter, to the well doth bring.

Grace is a treaſure in an earthen pot;
When death hath daſht it, no more can be got
Out of that veſſel: then, while it is whole,
Get out the treaſure to enrich your ſoul.

## CHAP. XI.

*The rocks abide, though ſeas againſt them rage:*
*So ſhall the church, which is God's heritage.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE rocks, though ſituate in the boiſterous and tempeſtuous ocean, yet abide firm and immoveable from age to age. The impetuous waves daſh againſt them with great violence, but cannot remove them out of their place. And although ſometimes they waſh over them, and make them to diſappear, yet there they remain fixed and impregnable.

### APPLICATION.

This is a lively emblem of the condition of the church, amidſt all dangers and oppoſitions wherewith it is encountered and aſſaulted in this world. Theſe *metaphorical* waves roar and beat with violence againſt it, but with as little ſucceſs as the ſea againſt the rocks, Matt. xvi. 18. "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the [gates] of "hell ſhall not prevail againſt it." The gates of hell are the power and policy of hell; for it is conceived to be an alluſive ſpeech to the gates of the Jews, wherein their ammunition for war was lodged, which alſo were the ſeats of judicature, there ſat the judges; but yet theſe gates of hell ſhall not prevail. Nay, this rock is not only invincible in the midſt of their violence, but alſo breaks all that daſh againſt it, Zech. xii. 3. "In that day I will make Jeruſalem a bur-"denſome ſtone for all people; all that burden themſelves with "it, ſhall he cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be ga-"thered together againſt it." An alluſion to one that eſſays to roll ſome great ſtone againſt the hill, which at laſt returns upon him, and cruſhes him to pieces.

And the reaſon why it is thus firm and impregnable, is not from itſelf; for alas, ſo conſidered, it is weak, and obnoxious to ruin; but from the almighty power of God, which guards and preſerves it day and night, Pſalm xlvi. 5, 6. "God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved: God ſhall help her, and that right early." Vatab. *Dum aſpacit mane.* When the morning appears. Which notes (ſaith Calvin) God's aſſiduous and conſtant help and ſuccour, which is extended in all dangers, as conſtantly as the ſun ariſes. And this aſſiduous ſuccour to his people, and their great ſecurity thereby, is ſet forth in the ſcriptures by a pleaſant variety of metaphors and emblems, Zech. ii. 5. "I, ſaith the Lord, will be a wall of fire round

« about it." Some think this phraſe alludes to the cherubim that kept the way of the tree of life with flaming ſwords: others to the fiery chariots round about Dathan, where Eliſha was; but moſt think it to be an alluſion to an ancient cuſtom of travellers in the deſarts; who, to prevent the aſſaults of wild beaſts in the night, made a circular fire round about them, which was as a wall to them. Thus will God be to his people a wall of fire, which none can ſcale. So Exod. iii. 3, 4, 5. we have an excellent emblem of the church's low and dangerous condition, and admirable preſervation. You have here both a *marvel* and a *myſtery*. The marvel was to ſee a buſh all on fire, and yet not conſumed. The myſtery is this, the buſh repreſented the ſad condition of the church of Egypt; the fire flaming upon it, the grievous afflictions, troubles, and bondage it was in there; the remaining of the buſh unconſumed, the ſtrange and admirable preſervation of the church in thoſe troubles. It lived there as the three noble Jews, untouched in the midſt of a burning fiery furnace: and the angel of the Lord in a flame of fire, in the midſt of the buſh was nothing elſe but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, powerfully and graciouſly preſent with his people amidſt all their dangers and ſufferings. The Lord is exceeding tender over them, and jealous for them, as that expreſſion imports, Zech. ii. 8. "He that toucheth "you, toucheth the apple of mine eye." He that ſtrikes at them, ſtrikes at the face of God, and at the moſt excellent part of the face, the eye, and at the moſt tender and precious part of the eye, the apple of the eye. And yet, as a learned modern obſerves, this people of whom he uſes this tender and dear expreſſion, were none of the beſt of Iſrael neither; but the reſidue that ſtaid behind in Babylon, when their brethren were gone to rebuild the temple; and yet over theſe, he is as tender as a man is over his eye.

REFLECTION.

And is the ſecurity of the church ſo great! and its preſervation ſo admirable, amidſt all ſtorms and tempeſts! then why art thou ſo prone and ſubject to deſpond, O my ſoul, in the day of Sion's trouble? Senſible thou waſt, and oughteſt to be: but no reaſon to hang down the head through diſcouragement, much leſs to forſake Zion in her diſtreſs, for fear of being ruined with her.

What David ſpake to Abiathar, 1 Sam. xxii. 23. that may Zion ſpeak to all her ſons and daughters in all their diſtreſſes: "Though "he that ſeeketh thy life ſeeketh mine alſo; yet with me ſhalt thou "be in ſafeguard." God hath entailed great ſalvation and deliverances upon Zion; and bleſſed are all her friends and favourers; the Rock of ages is its defence. Fear not, therefore, O my ſoul, though the hills be removed out of their place, and caſt into the midſt of the ſea. O let my faith triumph, and my heart rejoice upon this ground of comfort. I ſee the ſame rocks now, and in the ſame place and condition they were many years ago. Though they have endured many

ſtorms, yet there they abide; and ſo ſhall Zion, when the proud waves have ſpent their fury and rage againſt it.

## THE POEM.

MESOPOTAMIA, ſituate in the ſeas,
May repreſent the church; or, if you pleaſe,
A rock, o'er which the waves do waſh and ſwell,
May figure it; chuſe either, which you will.
Winds ſtrive upon thoſe ſeas, and make a noiſe,
The lofty waves ſometimes lift up their voice,
And, ſwelling high ſucceſſively, do beat
With violence againſt it, then retreat.
They break themſelves, but it abides their ſhock;
And when their rage is ſpent, there ſtands the rock.
Then they are out that do affirm and vote,
Peace, pomp, and ſplendor is the church's note.
And they deſerve no leſs reproof that are
In Zion's troubles ready to deſpair.
This rock amidſt far ſtronger rocks doth lie,
Which are its fence; ſo deep, ſo thick, ſo high,
They can't be batter'd, ſcal'd, or undermin'd:
And theſe, environ'd by them, daily find
Their bread aſcertain'd; waters too ſecur'd:
Then ſhout and ſing, ye that are thus immur'd.

## CHAP. XII.

*What dangers run they for little gains,*
*Who, for their ſouls, would ne'er take half the pains!*

### OBSERVATION.

HOW exceeding ſolicitous and adventurous are ſeamen for a ſmall portion of the world? How prodigal of ſtrength and life for it? They will run to the ends of the earth, engage in a thouſand dangers, upon the hopes and probability of getting a ſmall eſtate. *Per mare, per terras, per mille pericula currunt.* Hopes of gain make them willing to adventure their liberty, yea, their life, and encourage them to endure heat, cold, and hunger, and a thouſand ſtraits and difficulties, to which they are frequently expoſed.

### APPLICATION.

How hot and eager are men's affections after the world! and how remiſs and cold towards things eternal! they are careful, and troubled about many things; but ſeldom mind the great and neceſſary matter, Luke x. 40. They can riſe early, go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulneſs; but when did they ſo deny themſelves for their poor ſouls? Their heads are full of deſigns and projects to get or advance an eſtate: "We will go into ſuch a city, continue

« there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain," James iv. 13. This is the το εργον, the *maſter-deſign*, which engroſſeth all their time, ſtudies, and contrivances. The will hath paſt a decree for it, the heart and affections are fully let out to it, *They will be rich*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. This decree of the will, the Spirit of God takes deep notice of; and indeed it is the cleareſt and fulleſt diſcovery of a man's portion and condition: for look what is higheſt in the eſtimation, firſt and laſt in the thoughts, and upon which we ſpend our time and ſtrength with delight; certainly, that is our treaſure, Matth. vi. 20, 21. The heads and hearts of ſaints are full of ſolicitous cares and fears about their ſpiritual condition; the great deſign they drive on, to which all other things are but παρεργα, things by the by, is to make ſure their calling and election. This is the *pondus*, the weight and bias of their ſpirit; if their hearts ſtray and wander after any other thing, this reduces them again.

REFLECTION.

Lord, this hath been my manner from my youth, may the carnal-minded man ſay; I have been labouring for the meat that periſheth; diſquieting myſelf in vain, full of deſigns and projects for the world, and unwearied in my endeavours to compaſs an earthly treaſure; yet therein I have either been checked and diſappointed by Providence, or if I have obtained, yet I am no ſooner come to enjoy that content and comfort I promiſed myſelf in it, but I am ready to leave it all, to be ſtript out of it by death, and in that day all my thoughts periſh: But, in the mean time, what have I done for my ſoul? When did I ever break a night's ſleep, or deny and pinch myſelf for it? Ah! fool that I am! to nouriſh and pamper a vile body, which muſt ſhortly lie under the clods, and become a lothſome carcaſe; and, in the mean time, neglect and undo my poor ſoul, which partakes of the nature of angels, and muſt live for ever. I have kept others vineyards, but mine own vineyard I have not kept. I have been a perpetual drudge and ſlave to the world; in a worſe condition hath my ſoul been, than others that are condemned to the mines. Lord, change my treaſure, and change my heart: O let it ſuffice that I have been thus long labouring in the fire for very vanity: now gather up my heart and affections in thyſelf, and let my great deſign now be, to ſecure a ſpecial intereſt in thy bleſſed ſelf, that I may once ſay, « To me to live is Chriſt."

THE POEM.

THE face of man impreſs'd and ſtamp'd on gold,
With crown, and royal ſceptres, we behold.
No wonder that a human face it gains,
Since head, heart, ſoul, and body, it obtains.
Nor is it ſtrange a ſceptre it ſhould have,
That to its yoke the world doth ſo enſlave.
Charm'd with its chinking note, away they go,
Like eagles to the carcaſe, ride and row.

Thro' worlds of hazards fooliſh creatures run,
That into its embraces they may come.
Poor Indians, in the mines, my heart condoles,
But ſeldom turns aſide to pity ſouls,
Which are the ſlaves, indeed, that toil, and ſpend
Themſelves upon its ſervice. Surely, friend,
They are but ſextons, to prepare, and make
Thy grave, within thoſe mines, whence they do take
And dig their ore. Ah! many ſouls, I fear,
Whoſe bodies live, yet lie entombed there.
Is gold ſo tempting to you? Lo! Chriſt ſtands,
With length of days, and riches in his hands.
Gold in the fire try'd he freely proffers,
But few regard, or take thoſe golden offers.

## CHAP. XIII.

*Millions of creatures in the ſeas are fed:*
*Why then are ſaints in doubt of daily bread?*

### OBSERVATION.

THERE are multitudes of living creatures in the ſea. The Pſalmiſt ſaith, there are in it, "Things creeping innumerable, both "ſmall and great beaſts," Pſal. civ. 25. and we read, Gen. i. 20. that when God bleſſed the waters, he ſaid, "Let the waters bring "forth abundantly, both fiſh and fowl, that move in it, and fly about "it." Yet all thoſe multitudes of fiſh and fowl, both in ſea and land, are cared and provided for, Pſal. cxlv. 15, 16. "Thou giveſt "them their meat in due ſeaſon: thou openeſt thy hand, and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing."

### APPLICATION.

If God take care for the fiſhes of the ſea, and the fowls of the air, much more will he care and provide for thoſe that fear him. "When "the poor and needy ſeeketh water, and there is none, and "their tongue faileth for thirſt; I the Lord will hear them; I the "God of Iſrael will not forſake them," Iſa. xii. 17. "Take no "thought for your life, (ſaith the Lord) what ye ſhall eat, or what "ye ſhall drink; or for the body what ye ſhall put on:" Which he backs with an argument from God's providence over the creatures, and enforceth it with a [*much rather*] upon them, Matth. vi. 25, 31. God would have his people be without *carefulneſs*, i. e. anxious care, 1 Cor. vii. 32. "And to caſt their care upon him, for he careth for "them," 1 Pet. v. 7. There are two main arguments ſuggeſted in the goſpel, to quiet and ſatisfy the hearts of ſaints in this particular: the one is, that the gift of Jeſus Chriſt amounts to more than all theſe things come to; yea, in beſtowing him, he has given that which vir-

tually and eminently comprehends all theſe inferior mercies in it, Rom. viii. 32. "He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for "us all; how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?" And 1 Cor. iii. 22. "All things are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt "is God's." Another argument is, that God gives theſe temporal things to thoſe he never gave his Chriſt unto, and therefore there is no great matter in them; yea, to thoſe which, in a little while, are to be thruſt into hell, Pſal. xvii. 14. Now if God clothe and feed his enemies, if (to allude to that, Luke xii. 28.) he clothe the graſs, which to-day is in its pride and glory in the field, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven, into hell: how much more will he clothe and provide for you that are ſaints?

This God, that feeds all the creatures is your Father, and a Father that never dies; and therefore you ſhall not be as expoſed orphans that are the children of ſuch a Father. "For he hath ſaid, I will "never leave you nor forſake you," Heb. xiii. 3. I have read of a good woman, that in all wants and diſtreſſes was wont to encourage herſelf with that word, 2 Sam. xxii. 47. *The Lord liveth.* But one time, being in a deep diſtreſs, and forgetting that conſolation, one of her little children came to her, and ſaid, 'Mother, why weep ye ſo? What! is God dead now?" Which words, from a child, ſhamed her out of her unbelieving fears, and quickly brought her ſpirits to reſt. O ſaint, whilſt God lives thou canſt not want what is good for thee.

How ſweet a life might Chriſtians live, could they but bring their hearts to a full ſubjection to the diſpoſing will of God? to be content not only with what he commands and approves, but alſo with what he allots and appoints. It was a ſweet reply that a gracious woman once made upon her death-bed, to a friend that aſked, 'Whether ſhe 'were more willing to live, or die?' She anſwered, 'I am pleaſed 'with what God pleaſeth.' Yea, (ſaith her friend) but if God 'ſhould refer it to you, which would you chuſe?' 'Truly, (ſaid 'ſhe) if God would refer it to me, I would refer it to him again.' Ah! bleſſed life, when the will is ſwallowed up in the will of God, and the heart at reſt in his care and love, and pleaſed with all his appointments.

### REFLECTION.

I remember my fault this day, may many a gracious ſoul ſay. Ah! how faithleſs and diſtruſtful have I been, notwithſtanding the great ſecurity God hath given to my faith, both in his word and works! O my ſoul, thou haſt greatly ſinned therein, and diſhonoured thy Father! I have been worſe to my Father than my children are to me. They trouble not their thoughts with what they ſhall eat or drink, or put on, but truſt to my care and proviſion for that; yet I cannot truſt my Father, though I have ten thouſand times more reaſon ſo to do, than they have to truſt me, Matth. vii. 21. Surely, unleſs I were

jealous of my Father's affection, I could not be ſo dubious of his proviſion for me. Ah! I ſhould rather wonder that I have ſo much, than repine that I have no more. I ſhould rather have been troubled that I have done no more for God, than that I have received no more from God. I have not proclaimed it to the world by my converſation, that I have found a ſufficiency in him alone, as the ſaints have done, Hab. iii. 17, 18. How have I debaſed the faithfulneſs and all-ſufficiency of God, and magnified theſe earthly trifles, by my anxiety about them? Had I had more faith, a light purſe would not have made ſuch an heavy heart. Lord, how often haſt thou convinced me of this folly, and put me to the bluſh, when thou haſt confuted my unbelief! ſo that I have reſolved never to diſtruſt thee more, and yet new exigencies renew this corruption. How contradictory alſo hath my heart and my prayers been? I pray for them conditionally, and with ſubmiſſion to thy will; I dare not ſay to thee, I muſt have them; yet this hath been the language of my heart and life. O convince me of this folly!

## THE POEM.

VARIETY of curious fiſh are caught
Out of the ſea, and to our tables brought;
We pick the choiceſt bits, and then we ſay,
We are ſufficed; come, now take away.
The table's voided, you have done; but fain
I would perſuade to have it brought again.
The ſweeteſt bit of all remains behind,
Which, through your want of ſkill, you could not find.
A bit for faith, have you not found it? Then
I've made but half a meal; come, taſte again,
Haſt thou conſider'd, O my ſoul! that hand
Which feeds thoſe multitudes in ſea and land!
A double mercy in it thou ſhouldſt ſee;
It fed them firſt, and then with them fed thee.
Food in the waters we ſhould think were ſcant
For ſuch a multitude, yet none do want.
What num'rous flocks of birds about me fly?
When ſaw I one, through want, fall down, and die?
They gather what his hand to them doth bring,
Tho' but a worm, and at that feaſt can ſing.
How full a table doth my Father keep?
Bluſh then my naughty heart, repent, and weep;
How faithleſs and diſtruſtful haſt thou been,
Altho' his care and love thou oft haſt ſeen?
Thus in a ſingle diſh you have a feaſt,
Your firſt and ſecond courſe, the laſt the beſt.

## CHAP. XIV.

*Sea-waters drained through the earth, are ſweet;*
*So are th' afflictions which God's people meet.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE waters of the ſea, in themſelves, are brackiſh and unpleaſant, yet being exhaled by the ſun, and condenſed into clouds, they fall down into pleaſant ſhowers; or if drained through the earth, their property is thereby altered, and that which was ſo ſalt in the ſea, becomes exceeding ſweet and pleaſant in the ſprings. This we find by conſtant experience, the ſweeteſt cryſtal ſpring came from the ſea, Eccleſ. i. 7.

### APPLICATION.

Afflictions in themſelves are evil, Amos iii. 6. very bitter and unpleaſant. See Heb. xii. 11. Yet not morally and intrinſically evil, as ſin is; for if ſo, the holy God would never own it for his own act as he doth, Mic. iii. 2. but always diſclaimeth ſin, Jam. i. 3. Beſides, if it were ſo evil, it could, in no caſe or reſpect, be the object of our election and deſire, as in ſome caſes it ought to be, Heb. xi. 25. but it is evil, as it is the fruit of ſin, and grievous unto ſenſe, Heb. xii. 11. But though it be thus brackiſh and unpleaſant in itſelf, yet, paſſing through Chriſt and the covenant, it loſes that ungrateful property, and becomes pleaſant in the fruits and effects thereof unto believers.

Yea, ſuch are the bleſſed fruits thereof, that they are to account it all joy when they fall into divers afflictions, Jam. i. 2. David could bleſs God that he was afflicted, and many a ſaint hath done the like. A good woman once compared her afflictions to her children: 'For, 'ſaith ſhe) they put me in pain in bearing them; yet as I know not 'which child, ſo neither which affliction I could be without.'

Sometimes the Lord ſanctifies afflictions to diſcover the corruption that is in the heart, Deut. viii. 2. it is a furnace to ſhew the droſs. Ah! when a ſharp affliction comes, then the pride, impatience, and unbelief of the heart appear: *Matura vexatio prodit ſeipſam.* When the water is ſtirred, then the mud and filthy ſediment that lay at the bottom riſe. Little, ſaith the afflicted ſoul, did I think there had been in me that pride, ſelf-love, diſtruſt of God, carnal fear, and unbelief, as I now find. O where is my patience, my faith, my glory in tribulation? I could not have imagined the ſight of death would have ſo appalled me, the loſs of outward things have ſo pierced me. Now what a bleſſed thing is this to have the heart thus diſcovered.

Again, ſanctified afflictions diſcover the emptineſs and vanity of the creature. Now, the Lord hath ſtained its pride, and veiled its tempting ſplendor, by this or that affliction; and the ſoul ſees what an empty, ſhallow, deceitful thing it is. The world (as one hath

truly obſerved) is then only great in our eyes, when we are full of ſenſe and ſelf: but now affliction makes us more ſpiritual, and then it is nothing. It drives them nearer to God, makes them ſee the neceſſity of the life of faith, with multitudes of other benefits.

But yet theſe ſweet fruits of afflictions do not naturally, and of their own accord, ſpring from it; no, we may as well look for grapes from thorns, or figs from thiſtles, as for ſuch fruits from affliction, till Chriſt's ſanctifying hand and art have paſſed upon them.

The reaſon why they become thus ſweet and pleaſant (as I noted before) is, becauſe they run now in another channel; Jeſus Chriſt hath removed them from mount Ebal to Gerizim; they are no more the effects of vindictive wrath, but paternal chaſtiſement. And, as * Mr Caſe well notes, 'a teaching affliction is to the ſaints, the re-'ſult of all the offices of Jeſus Chriſt. As a king, he chaſtens; as 'a prophet, he teacheth, *viz.* by chaſtening; and, as a prieſt, he 'hath purchaſed this grace of the Father, that the dry rod might 'bloſſom, and bear fruit.' Behold, then, a ſanctified affliction is a cup, whereinto Jeſus hath wrung and preſſed the juice and virtue of all his mediatorial offices. Surely, that muſt be a cup of generous, royal wine, like that in the ſupper, a cup of bleſſing to the people of God.

REFLECTION.

Hence may the unſanctified ſoul draw matter of fear and trouble, even from its unſanctified troubles. And thus it may reflect upon itſelf: O my ſoul! what good haſt thou gotten by all, or any of thy afflictions? God's rod hath been dumb to thee, or thou deaf to it. I have not learned one holy inſtruction from it; my troubles have left me the ſame, or worſe than they found me; my heart was proud, earthly, and vain before, and ſo it remains ſtill; they have not purged out, but only given vent to the pride, murmur, and atheiſm of my heart. I have been in my afflictions, as that wicked Ahaz was in his, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. who, "in the midſt of his diſtreſs, "yet treſpaſſed more and more againſt the Lord." When I have been in ſtorms at ſea, or troubles at home, my ſoul within me hath been as a raging ſea, caſting up mire and dirt. Surely this rod is not the rod of God's children; I have proved but droſs in the furnace, and I fear the Lord will put me away as droſs, as he threatens to do to the wicked, Pſal. cxix. 119.

Hence alſo ſhould gracious ſouls draw much encouragement and comfort amidſt all their troubles. O theſe are the fruits of God's fatherly love to me! why ſhould I fear in the day of evil! or tremble any more at affliction? Though they ſeem as a ſerpent at a diſtance, yet are they a rod in the hand. O bleſſed be that ſkilful and gracious hand, that makes the rod, the dry rod to bloſſom, and bear ſuch precious fruit.

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* Correction, Inſtruction, p. 82.

Lord, what a myſtery of love lies in this diſpenſation! that ſin, which firſt brought afflictions into the world, is now itſelf carried out of the world by affliction, Rom. v. 12. Iſa. vii. 9. O what can fruſtrate my ſalvation, when thoſe very things that ſeem moſt to oppoſe it, are made ſubſervient to it, and, contrary to their own nature, do promote and further it?

## THE POEM.

'TIS ſtrange to hear what different cenſures fall
Upon the ſame affliction; ſome do call
Their troubles ſweet, ſome bitter; others meet
Them both mid-way, and call them bitter ſweet.
But here's the queſtion ſtill, I fain would ſee,
Why ſweet to him, and bitter unto me?
Thou drink'ſt them, dregs and all, but others find
Their troubles ſweet, becauſe to them refin'd
And ſanctify'd; which difference is beſt,
By ſuch apt ſimilies as theſe expreſt:
From ſalt and brackiſh ſeas fumes riſe and fly,
Which, into clouds condens'd, obſcure the ſky;
Their property there alter'd, in few hours,
Thoſe brackiſh fumes fall down in pleaſant ſhow'rs:
Or as the dregs of wine and beer, diſtill'd
By limbec, with ingredients, doth yield
A cordial water, tho' the lees were bitter,
From whence the chymiſt did extract ſuch liquor.
Then marvel not, that one can kiſs that rod,
Which makes another to blaſpheme his God.
O get your troubles ſweeten'd and refin'd,
Or elſe they'll leave bitter effects behind.
Saints troubles are a cord, let down my love,
To pully up their hearts to things above.

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## CHAP. XV.

*The ſeas within their bounds the Lord contains:*
*He alſo men and devils holds in chains.*

### OBSERVATION.

IT is a wonderful work of God to limit and bound ſuch a vaſt and furious creature as the ſea, which, according to the judgment of many learned men, is higher than the earth; and that it hath a propenſion to overflow it, is evident both from its nature and motion: were it not that the great God had laid his law upon it. And this is a work wherein the Lord glories, and will be admired. Pſal. civ. 9. "Thou haſt ſet a bound that they may not paſs over, that "they turn not again to cover the earth." Which it is clear they would do, were they not thus limited. So Job xxxviii. 8, 10, 11.

" Who ſhut up the ſea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had " iſſued out of the womb? I brake up for it my decreed place, and " ſet bars and doors, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, but no " further; and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed."

APPLICATION.

And no leſs is the glorious power and mercy of God diſcovered in bridling the rage and fury of Satan and his inſtruments, that they break not in upon the inheritance of the Lord, and deſtroy it. " Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, and the remainder of " wrath thou ſhalt reſtrain," Pſal. lxxvi. 10. By which it is more than hinted, that there is a world of rage and malice in the hearts of wicked men, which fain would, but cannot vent itſelf, becauſe the Lord reſtrains, or, as in the Hebrew, *girds it up*. Satan is the envious one, and his rage is great againſt the people of God, Rev. xii. 12. But God holds him, and all his inſtruments in a chain of providence; and it is well for God's people that it is ſo.

They are limited as the ſea, and ſo the Lord in a providential way ſpeaks to them, " Hitherto ſhall ye come, and no further." Sometimes he ties them up ſo ſhort, that they cannot touch his people, though they have the greateſt opportunities and advantages. Pſal. cv. 12, 13, 14, 15. " When they were but a few men in number; " yea, very few, and ſtrangers in it; when they went from one na- " tion to another, from one kingdom to another people, he ſuffered " no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their " ſakes, ſaying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no " harm." And ſometimes he permits them to touch and trouble his people, but then ſets bounds and limits to them, beyond which they muſt not paſs. That is a pregnant text to this purpoſe, Rev. ii. 10. " Behold the devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, that ye may be " tried, and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days."

Here are four remarkable limitations upon Satan and his agents in reference to the people of God: a limitation as to the *perſons*, not all, but ſome; a limitation of the *puniſhment*, a priſon, not a grave, not hell; a limitation upon them as to the *end*, for trial, not ruin; and laſtly, as to the *duration*, not as long as they pleaſe, but ten days.

REFLECTION.

O my ſoul! what marrow and fatneſs, comfort and conſolation mayeſt thou ſuck from the breaſt of this truth in the darkeſt day of trouble? Thou ſeeſt how the flowing ſeas drives to overwhelm the earth. Who has arreſted it in its courſe, and ſtopt its violence? who has confined it to its place? Certainly none other but the Lord. When I ſee it threaten the ſhore with its proud, furious, and inſulting waves, I wonder it doth not ſwallow up all: but I ſee it no ſooner touch the ſands, which God hath made its bounds, but it retires, and, as it were, with a kind of ſubmiſſion, reſpects thoſe limits which God hath ſet it.

Thus the fierceſt element is repreſſed by the feebleſt things: thou ſeeſt alſo how full of wrath and fury wicked men are, how they rage like the troubled ſea, and threaten to overwhelm thee, and all the Lord's inheritance: and then the floods of ungodly men make thee afraid; yet are they reſtrained by an inviſible, gracious hand, that they cannot execute their purpoſe, nor perform their enterprize. How full of devils and devilized men is this lower world? Yet, in the midſt of them all, haſt thou hitherto been preſerved. O! my ſoul, admire and adore that glorious power of God, by which thou art kept unto ſalvation. Is not the preſervation of a ſaint in the midſt of ſuch hoſts of enemies as great a miracle, though not ſo ſenſible as the preſervation of thoſe three noble Jews in the midſt of the fiery furnace, or Daniel in the den of lions? For there is as ſtrong a propenſion in Satan and wicked men, to deſtroy the ſaints, as in the fire to burn, or a lion to devour. O! then, let me cheerfully addreſs myſelf to the faithful diſcharge of my duty, and ſtand no longer in a ſlaviſh fear of creatures, who can have no power againſt me but what is given them from above, John xix. 11. And no more ſhall be given than ſhall turn to the glory of God, Pſal. lxxvi. 10. and the advantage of my ſoul, Rom. viii. 28.

## THE POEM.

THIS world's a foreſt, where, from day to day,
Bears, wolves, and lions, range and ſeek their prey;
Amidſt them all poor harmleſs lambs are fed,
And by their very dens in ſafety led.
They roar upon us, but are held in chains;
Our ſhepherd is their keeper, he maintains
Our lot. Why then ſhould we ſo trembling ſtand?
We meet them, true, but in their keeper's hand.
He that to raging ſeas ſuch bounds hath put,
The mouth of rav'nous beaſts can alſo ſhut.
Sleep in the woods, poor lambs, yourſelves repoſe
Upon his care, whoſe eyes do never cloſe.
If unbelief in you don't loſe their chain,
Fear not their ſtruggling, that's but all in vain.
If God can check the waves by ſmalleſt ſand,
A twined thread may hold theſe in his hand.
Shun ſin, keep cloſe to Chriſt; for other evils
You need not fear, tho' compaſs'd round with devils.

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## CHAP. XVI.

*To ſea without a compaſs none dare go:*
*Our courſe without the word is even ſo.*

### OBSERVATION.

OF how great uſe and neceſſity is the compaſs to ſeamen! though they can coaſt a little way by the ſhore, yet they dare not ven-

ture far into the ocean without it: it is their guide, and directs and ſhapes their courſe for them: and if by the violence of wind and weather they are driven beſide their due courſe, yet by the help of this they are reduced, and brought to rights again. It is wonderful to conſider, how, by the help of this guide, they can run in a direct line many hundred leagues, and at laſt fall right with the ſmalleſt iſland; which is in the ocean comparatively, but as the head of a ſmall pin upon a table.

APPLICATION.

What the compaſs and all other mathematical inſtruments are to the navigator, that and much more is the word of God to us in our courſe to heaven. This is our compaſs to ſteer our courſe by, and it is truly touched; he that orders his converſation by it ſhall ſafely arrive in heaven at laſt. Gal. vi. 16. "As many as walk according to this "rule, peace be on them and mercy."

This word is as neceſſary to us in our way to glory, as a lamp or lanthorn is in a dark night, Pſal. cxix. 105. that is a light ſhining in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in our hearts, 2 Pet. i. 19. If any that profeſs to know it and own it as a rule, miſs heaven at laſt, let them not blame the word for miſguiding them, but their own negligent and deceitful hearts, that ſhuffle in and out, and ſhape not their courſe and converſation according to its preſcriptions.

What blame can you lay upon the compaſs, if you ſteer not exactly by it? How many are there, that neglecting this rule, will coaſt it to heaven by their own reaſon? No wonder ſuch fall ſhort, and periſh in the way. This is a faithful guide, and brings all that follow it to a bleſſed end; "Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and after-"wards receive me to glory." Pſal. lxxiii. 24. The whole hundred and nineteenth pſalm is ſpent in commendation of its tranſcendent excellency and uſefulneſs. Luther profeſſed that he prized it ſo highly, that he would not take the whole world in exchange for one leaf of it. Lay but this rule before you, and walk accurately by it, and you cannot be out of your way to heaven, Pſalm cxix. 30. "I "have choſen the way of truth (or the true way;) thy judgments "have I laid before me." Some indeed have opened their detracting blaſphemous mouths againſt it; as Julian, that vile apoſtate, who feared not to ſay, there was as good matter in Phocillides as in Solomon, in Pindarus's odes, as in David's pſalms.

And the papiſts generally ſlight it, making it a lame, imperfect rule; yea, making their own traditions the touchſtone of doctrines, and foundation of faith. Montanus tells us, that although the apoſtle would have ſermons and ſervice celebrated in a known tongue, yet the church, for very good cauſe, hath otherwiſe ordered it. Gilford called it the mother of hereſies. Bonner's chaplain judged it worthy to be burnt as a ſtrange doctrine. They ſet up their inventions above it, and frequently come in with a *non obſtante* againſt Chriſt's inſtitu-

tions. And thus do they make it void, or, as the word κυρωσαι, ſignifies, Matth. xv. 6. unlord it, and take away its authority as a rule. But thoſe that have thus ſlighted it, and followed the by-paths unto which their corrupt hearts have led them, they take not hold of the paths of life, and are now in the depths of hell. All other lights to which men pretend, in the neglect of this, are but falſe fires that will lead men into the pits and bogs of deſtruction at laſt.

REFLECTION.

And is thy word a compaſs, to direct my courſe to glory? O where am I then like to arrive at laſt, that in all my courſe have neglected it, and ſteered according to the counſel of my own heart! Lord, I have not made thy word the man of my council, but conſulted with fleſh and blood; I have not enquired at this oracle, nor ſtudied it, and made it the guide of my way, but walked after the ſight of my eyes, and the luſt of my heart. Whither, Lord! can I come at laſt, but to hell, after this way of reckoning? Some have ſlighted thy word profeſſedly, and I have ſlighted it practically. I have a poor ſoul embarked for eternity, it is now floating on a dangerous ocean, rocks and ſands on every ſide, and I go-a-drift before every wind of temptation, and know not where I am. Ah, Lord! convince me of the danger of this condition. O convince me of my ignorance in thy word, and the fatal conſequence and iſſue thereof. Lord, let me now reſolve to ſtudy, prize, and obey it; hide it in my heart, that I may not ſin againſt it. Open my underſtanding, that I may underſtand the ſcriptures; open my heart to entertain it in love. O thou that haſt been ſo gracious to give a perfect rule, give me alſo a perfect heart to walk by that rule to glory!

## THE POEM.

THIS world's a ſea, wherein a num'rous fleet
Of ſhips are under ſail. Here you ſhall meet
Of ev'ry rate and ſize; frigates, galleons,
The nimble ketches, and ſmall pickeroons:
Some bound to this port; ſome where winds and weather
Will drive them, they are bound they know not whither.
Some ſteer away for heaven, ſome for hell;
To which ſome ſteer, themſelves can hardly tell.
The winds do ſhape their courſe, which tho' it blow
From any point, before it they muſt go.
They are directed by the wind and tide,
That have no compaſs to direct and guide:
For want of this, muſt run themſelves a ground,
Brave ſhips are caſt away, poor ſouls are drown'd.
Thy word our compaſs is, to guide our way
To glory; it reduces ſuch as ſtray.
Lord, let thy word dwell richly in my heart,
And make me ſkilful in this heavenly art:

O let me underſtand, and be ſo wiſe,
To know upon what point my country lies:
And having ſet my courſe directly thither,
Great God preſerve me in the fouleſt weather.
By reaſon ſome will coaſt it; but I fear,
Such coaſters never will drop anchor there.
Thy word is truly touch'd, and ſtill directs
A proper courſe, which my baſe heart neglects.
Lord, touch my iron heart, and make it ſtand
Pointing to thee, its loadſtone. To that land
Of reſt above, let ev'ry tempeſt drive
My ſoul, where it would rather be than live.

## CHAP. XVII.

*Look as the ſea, by turns, doth ebb and flow,*
*So their eſtates, that uſe it, come and go.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE ſea hath its alternate courſe and motion, its ebbings and flowings; no ſooner is it high water, but it begins to ebb again, and leave the ſhore naked and dry, which but a little before it covered and overflowed. And as its tides, ſo alſo its waves are the emblem of inconſtancy, ſtill rolling and tumbling, this way and that, never fixed and quiet. *Inſtabilis unda: as fickle as a wave*, is common, to a proverb, See Jam. i. 6. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea "driven with the wind, and toſſed." So Iſa. lvii. 20. "It cannot "reſt."

### APPLICATION.

Thus mutable and inconſtant are all outward things, there is no depending on them: nothing of any ſubſtance, or any ſolid conſiſtence in them, 1 Cor. vii. 31. "The faſhion of this world paſſeth "away." It is an high point of folly to depend upon ſuch vanities: Prov. xxiii. 5. "Why wilt thou ſet (or, as it is in the Hebrew, cauſe) "thine eyes to fly upon that which is not? For riches certainly "make themſelves wings, and fly away, as an eagle towards hea-"ven." In flying to us (ſaith Auguſtine) they have, *alas vix quidem paſſerinas*, ſcarce a ſparrow's wings; but in flying from us, wings as an eagle. And thoſe wings they are ſaid to make to themſelves; i. e. the cauſe of its tranſitorineſs is in itſelf; the creature is ſubjected to vanity by ſin; they are ſweet flowers, but withered preſently, James i. 10. "As the flower of the graſs, ſo ſhall the rich man fade "away." The man is like the ſtalk or graſs, his riches are the flower of the graſs; his glory and outward beauty, the ſtalk, is ſoon withered, but the flower much ſooner. This is either withered upon, or blown off from it, while the ſtalk abides. Many a man outlives his

eſtate and honour, and ſtands in the world as a bare dry ſtalk in the field, whoſe flower, beauty, and bravery are gone: one puff of wind blows it away, one churliſh eaſterly blaſt ſhrivels it up, 1 Pet. iv. 24.

How mad a thing is it, then, for any man to be lifted up in pride, upon ſuch a vanity as this is! to build ſo lofty and over-jetting a roof upon ſuch a feeble, tottering foundation! We have ſeen meadows full of ſuch curious flowers, mown down and withered; men of great eſtates impoveriſhed ſuddenly; and when, like a meadow that is mown, they have begun to recover themſelves again, (as the phraſe is) the Lord hath ſent "graſhoppers in the beginning of the ſhooting up of "the latter growth," Amos vii. 2. Juſt as the graſhoppers and other creatures, devour the ſecond tender herbage as ſoon as the field begins to recover its verdure; ſo men, after they have been denuded and blaſted by Providence, they begin after a while to flouriſh again; but then comes ſome new affliction and blaſts all. None have more frequent experience of this than you that are merchants and ſeamen, whoſe eſtates are floating; and yet ſuch as have had the higheſt ſecurity in the eye of reaſon, have, notwithſtanding, experienced the vanity of theſe things. Henry IV. a potent prince was reduced to ſuch a low ebb, that he petitioned for a prebend's place in the church of Spire. Gallimer, king of the Vandals, was brought ſo low, that he ſent to his friends for a ſpunge, a loaf of bread, and an harp: a ſpunge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an harp to ſolace him in his miſery. The ſtory of Belliſarius is very affecting: he was a man famous in his time, general of an army, yet having his eyes put out, and ſtripped of all earthly comforts, was led about crying, *Date obolum Belliſario.* Give one penny to poor Belliſarius. Inſtances in hiſtory of this kind are infinite. Men of the greateſt eſtates and honours have nevertheleſs become the very *ludibria fortunæ*, as one ſpeaks, the very ſcorn of fortune.

Yea, and not only wicked men that have gotten their eſtates by rapine and oppreſſion, have lived to ſee them thus ſcattered by Providence: but ſometimes godly men have had their eſtates, how juſtly ſoever acquired, thus ſcattered by providence alſo. Whoever had an eſtate, better gotten, better bottomed, or better managed, than Job? yet all was overthrown and ſwept away in a moment; though in mercy to him, as the iſſue demonſtrated.

Oh then! what a vanity is it to ſet the heart, and ſet out the affections on them! you can never depend too much upon God, nor too little upon the creature, 1 Tim. vi. 17. "Charge them that are rich "in this world, that they be not high-minded and truſt in uncertain "riches."

REFLECTION.

Are all earthly things thus tranſitory and vain? Then what a reproach and ſhame is it to me, that the men of this world ſhould be more induſtrious and eager in the proſecution of ſuch vanities, than

I am to enrich my ſoul with ſolid and everlaſting treaſure? O that ever a ſenſual luſt ſhould be more operative in them than the love of God in me! O my ſoul, thou doſt not lay out thy ſtrength and earneſtneſs for heaven with any proportion to what they do for the world. I have indeed higher motives, and a ſurer reward than they: but as I have an advantage above them herein, ſo they have an advantage above me in the ſtrength and entireneſs of the principle by which they are acted. What they do for the world, they do it with all their might; they have no contrary principle to oppoſe them; their thoughts, ſtrength, and affections are entirely carried in one channel; but I find "a law in my members warring againſt the law of "my mind;" I muſt ſtrive through a thouſand difficulties and contradictions to the diſcharge of a duty. O my God! ſhall not my heart be more enlarged in zeal, love, and delight in thee, than theirs are after their luſts? O let me once find it ſo.

Again, is the creature ſo vain and unſtable? Then why are my affections ſo hot and eager after it? And why am I ſo apt to doat upon its beauty, eſpecially when God is ſtaining all its pride and glory! Jer. xlv. 5, 6. Surely it is unbecoming the ſpirit of a Chriſtian at any time, but at ſuch a time we may ſay of it, as Huſhai of Ahithophel's counſel, "It is not good at this time."

O that my ſpirit were raiſed above them, and my converſation more in heaven! O that like that angel, Rev. x. 1, 2. which came down from heaven, and ſet one foot upon the ſea, and another upon the earth, having a crown upon his head, ſo I might ſet one foot upon all the cares, fears, and terrors of the world, and another upon all the tempting ſplendor and glory of the world, treading both underfoot in the duſt, and crowning myſelf with nothing but ſpiritual excellencies and glory!

## THE POEM.

JUDGE in thyſelf, O Chriſtian! is it meet
To ſet thy heart on what beaſts ſet their feet?
'Tis no hyperbole, if you be told,
You dig for droſs with mattocks made of gold.
Affections are too coſtly to beſtow
Upon the fair-fac'd nothings here below.
The eagle ſcorns to fall down from on high,
(The proverb ſaith) to catch the ſilly fly.
And can a Chriſtian leave the face of God,
T' embrace th' earth, or doat upon a clod?
Can earthly things thy heart ſo ſtrangely move,
To tempt it down from the delights above;
And now to court the world at ſuch a time
When God is laying judgment to the line?
'Tis juſt like him that doth his cabin ſweep
And trim, when all is ſinking in the deep:

Or like the ſilly bird that to her neſt
Doth carry ſtraws, and never is at reſt,
Till it be feather'd well, but doth not ſee
The ax beneath, that's hewing down the tree.
If on a thorn thy heart itſelf repoſe
With ſuch delight, what if it were a roſe?
Admire, O ſaint, the wiſdom of thy God,
Who of the ſelf-ſame tree doth make a rod,
Leſt thou ſhouldſt ſurfeit on forbidden fruit,
And live not like a ſaint, but like a brute.

## CHAP. XVIII.

*Like hungry lions, waves for ſinners gape:*
*Leave then your ſins behind, if you'll eſcape.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE waves of the ſea are ſometimes raiſed by God's commiſſion, to be executioners of his threatenings upon ſinners. When Jonah fled from the preſence of the Lord to Tarſhiſh, the text ſaith, "The Lord ſent out a great wind into the ſea, and there was a mighty "tempeſt, ſo that the ſhip was like to be broken," Jonah i. 4. Theſe were God's bailiffs to arreſt the run-away prophet. And Pſal. cxlviii. 8. The ſtormy winds are ſaid to *fulfil his word*; not only his word of command, in riſing when God bids them, but his word of *threatening* alſo. And hence it is called a *deſtroying wind*, Jer. li. 1. and a *ſtormy wind in God's fury*, Ezek. xiii. 13.

### APPLICATION.

If theſe be the executioners of God's threatenings, how ſad then is their condition that put forth to ſea under the guilt of all their ſins? O, if God ſhould commiſſionate the winds to go after and arreſt thee for all thou oweſt him, where art thou then? How dare you put forth under the power of a divine threat, before all be cleared betwixt God and thee? Sins in ſcripture are called debts, Matth. vi. 12. They are debts to God; not that we owe them to him, or ought to ſin, but *metonymically*, becauſe they render the ſinner obnoxious to God's judgments, even as pecuniary debts oblige him that hath not wherewith to pay, to ſuffer puniſhment. All ſinners muſt undergo the curſe, either in their own perſon, according to the expreſs letter of the law, Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10. or their ſurety, according to the tacit intent of the law, manifeſted to be the mind of the lawgiver, Gen. iii. 13, 14.

Now he that by faith hath intereſt in this ſurety, hath his diſcharge, his *quietus eſt*, ſealed in the blood of Chriſt; all proceſs at law, or from the law, is ſtopt, Rom. viii. 1. But if thou be an impenitent, perſiſting ſinner, thy debt remains upon thine own ſcore,

"And be ſure thy ſin will find thee out, wherever thou goeſt," Numb. xxxii. 23. i. e. God's revenging hand for ſin will be upon thee: Thou mayeſt loſe the ſight and memory of thy ſins, but they loſe not the ſight of thee; they follow after, as the hound doth the fleeting game upon the ſcent, till they have fetched thee up: And then conſider, "How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the "living God," Heb. x. 31. How ſoon may a ſtorm arreſt, and bring thee before the bar of God?

REFLECTION.

O my ſoul, what a caſe art thou in, if this be ſo? Are not all thy ſins yet upon thine own ſcore? Haſt not thou made light of Chriſt, and that precious blood of his, and hitherto perſiſted in thy rebellion againſt him? And what can the iſſue of this be at laſt but ruin? There is abundant mercy indeed for returning ſinners; but the goſpel ſpeaks of none for perſiſting and impenitent ſinners. And though many who are going on in their ſins are overtaken by grace, yet there is no grace promiſed to ſuch as go on in ſin. O! if God ſhould arreſt me by the next ſtorm, and call me to an account for all that I owe him, I muſt then lie in the priſon of hell to all eternity; for I can never pay the debt; nay, all the angels in heaven cannot ſatisfy for it. Being chriſtleſs, I am under all the curſes in the book of God; a child of Hagar. Lord pity and ſpare me a little longer! O diſcover thy Chriſt unto me, and give me faith in his blood, and then thou art fully ſatisfied at once, and I diſcharged for ever. O require not the debt at my hand, for then thou wilt never be ſatisfied, nor I acquitted. What profit, Lord, is there in my blood! O my ſoul, make haſte to this Chriſt, thy refuge city; thou knoweſt not how ſoon the avenger of blood may overtake thee.

THE POEM.

THY ſins are debts, God puts them to account;
Canſt tell, poor wretch, to what thy debts amount?
Thou fill'ſt the treaſure of thy ſins each hour.
Into his vials God doth alſo pour
Proportionable wrath: Thou ſeeſt it not;
But yet aſſure thyſelf, there's drop for drop.
For every ſand of patience running out,
A drop of wrath runs in. Soul, look about!
God's treaſure's almoſt full, as well as thine:
When both are full, O then the dreadful time
Of reck'ning comes; thou ſhalt not gain a day
Of patience more, but there haſtes away
Heaven's purſevant, who comes upon the wing
With his commiſſion ſeal'd, to take and bring.
Doſt ſtill reject Chriſt's tenders? Well, next ſtorm
May be the bailiff order'd to perform
This dreadful office. O then reſtleſs be,
Till God in Chriſt be reconcil'd to thee.

The ſum is great, but if a Chriſt thou get,
Fear not, a prince can pay a beggar's debt.
Now if the ſtorm ſhould riſe, thou needſt not fear;
Thou art, but the delinquent is not there.
A pard'ned ſoul to ſea may boldly go:
He fears not bailiffs, that doth nothing owe.

## CHAP. XIX.

*To ſave the ſhip, rich lading's caſt away*
*Thy ſoul is ſhipwreck'd if thy luſts do ſtay.*

### OBSERVATION.

IN ſtorms and diſtreſſes at ſea, the richeſt commodities are caſt overboard; they ſtand not upon it, when life and all is in jeopardy and hazard, Jonah i. 5. The mariners caſt forth the wares that were in the ſhip into the ſea, to lighten it. And, Acts xxvii. 18, 19. they caſt out the very tacklings of the ſhip. How highly ſoever men prize ſuch commodities, yet reaſon tells them, it were better theſe ſhould periſh, than life. Satan himſelf could ſay, Job i. "Skin for ſkin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life."

### APPLICATION.

And ſurely, it is every way as highly reaſonable, that men ſhould mortify, caſt out, and cut off their deareſt luſts, rather than their immortal ſouls ſhould ſink and periſh in the ſtorm of God's wrath. Life indeed is a precious treaſure, and highly valued by men: You know what Solomon ſaith, Eccleſ. ix. 4. That "a living dog is better than "a dead lion." And we find men willing to part with their eſtates, limbs, or any outward comfort for the preſervation of it. The woman in the goſpel ſpent all ſhe had on the phyſicians for her health, a degree below life. Some men indeed do much overvalue their lives, and part with Chriſt and peace of conſcience for it; but he that thus ſaves it, ſhall loſe. Now if life be ſo much worth, what then is the ſoul worth? Alas! life is but a "vapour, which appeareth for a "little while, and then vaniſheth away," Jam. iv. 14.

Life indeed is more worth than all the world, but my ſoul is more worth than ten thouſand lives. *Nature* teacheth you to value the firſt ſo high, and *grace* ſhould teach you to value the ſecond much higher, Matth. xix. 20. Now here is the caſe: Either you muſt part with your ſins, or with your ſouls; if theſe be not caſt out, both muſt ſink together. "If ye live after the fleſh, ye muſt die," Rom. viii. 13. God ſaith to you in this caſe, as to Ahab, when he ſpared Benhadad, 1 Kings xx. 42. "Becauſe thou haſt let go a man whom God "hath appointed to deſtruction, therefore thy life ſhall go for his "life." Guilt will raiſe a ſtorm of wrath, as Jonah did, if not caſt out.

REFLECTION.

And muſt ſin or the ſoul periſh? Muſt my life, yea, my eternal life go for it if I ſpare it? O then let me not be cruel to mine own ſoul in ſparing my ſin; O my ſoul, this fooliſh pity and cruel indulgence will be thy ruin: If I ſpare it, God hath ſaid, "He will not "ſpare me," Deut. xxvi. 20. It is true the pains of mortification are ſharp, but yet is eaſier than the pains of hell. To cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye is hard; but to have my ſoul cut off eternally from God is harder. Is it as eaſy (O my ſoul!) to burn for them in hell, as to mortify them on earth? Surely, it is "profita-"ble for me, that one member periſh, rather than that all be caſt in-"to hell," Matth. v. 24. I ſee the merchant willing to part with rich wares if embarked with them in a ſtorm: And thoſe that have gangrened legs or arms, willingly ſtretch them out to be cut off to preſerve life: And ſhall I be willing to endure no difficulties for my ſoul? Chriſt reckoned ſouls worth his blood: And is it not worth my ſelf-denial? Lord, let me not warm a ſnake in my boſom, that will at laſt ſting me to the heart.

THE POEM.

THY ſoul's the ſhip, its lading is its luſts,
God's judgments, ſtormy winds, and dang'rous guſts;
Conſcience the maſter; but the ſtubborn will
Goes *ſupra cargo*, and doth keep the bill:
Affections are the men. The winds do riſe,
The ſtorm increaſes: Conſcience gives advice
To throw thoſe luſts o'erboard, and ſo to eaſe
The veſſel, which elſe cannot keep the ſeas.
The will oppoſes, and th' affections ſay,
The maſter's counſel they will not obey.
The caſe is dang'rous, that no man can doubt,
Who ſees the ſtorm within, and that without.
Luſts and affections cannot part; no, rather,
They are reſolv'd to ſwim or ſink together.
Conſcience ſtill ſtrives, but they cannot abide
That it or reaſon ſhould the caſe decide.
Luſt knows that reaſon, in like caſes, ſtill
Determines well: Then chuſe ye whom ye will.
Shall make the devil judge? This caſe has been
Before him, and he judg'd, that ſkin for ſkin,
And all men have, they'll part with for their life.
Then how unreaſonable is this ſtrife?
They that their ſins do with their perſons ſhip,
Do for their ſouls prepare a dreadful whip.

## CHAP. XX.

*Chriſt, with a word, can ſurging waves appeaſe:*
*His voice a troubled ſoul can quickly eaſe.*

### OBSERVATION

WHEN the ſea works, and is tempeſtuous, it is not in the power of any creature to appeaſe it. When the Egyptians would by their hieroglyphics expreſs an impoſſibility, they did it by the picture of a man treading upon the waves. It is ſtoried of Canute, an antient Daniſh king, that when a mighty ſtorm of flattery aroſe upon him, he appeaſed it by ſhewing that he could not appeaſe the ſea: But one of his courtiers told him as he rode near the ſea-ſide, 'That he was Lord of the ſea as well as land.' 'Well, (ſaid the 'king) we ſhall ſee that by and by;' and ſo went to the water-ſide, and with a loud voice cried, 'O ye ſeas and waves, come no further, 'touch not my feet.' But the ſea came up, notwithſtanding that charge, and confuted the flattery. But now Jeſus Chriſt hath command of them indeed: It is ſaid of him, Matth. viii. 20, *That he rebuked them.* And Mark iv. 38. He quiets them with a word, *Peace, be ſtill*; as one would huſh a child, and it obeyed him.

### APPLICATION.

Conſcience, when awakened by the terrors of the Lord, is like a raging tempeſtuous ſea; ſo it works, ſo it roars; and it is not in the power of all creatures to huſh or quiet it. Spiritual terrors, as well as ſpiritual conſolations are not known till felt. O when the arrows of the Almighty are ſhot into the ſpirit, and the terrors of God ſet themſelves in array againſt the ſoul; when the venom of thoſe arrows drink up the ſpirits, and thoſe armies of terrors charge violently and ſucceſſively upon it, as Job vi. 4. What creature then is able to ſtand before them! Even God's own dear children have felt ſuch terrors as have *diſtracted them*, Pſal. lxxxi. 15. Conſcience is the ſeat of guilt: it is like a burning glaſs, ſo it contracts the beams of the threatnings, twiſts them together, and reflects them on the ſoul, until it ſmoke, ſcorch, and flame. If the wrath of a king be like the roaring of a lion, then what is the Almighty's wrath! which is *burning wrath*, Job xix. 11. *Tearing wrath*, Pſal. l. 22. *Surprizing wrath*, Job xx. 23. And *abiding wrath*, Job iii. 36.

In this caſe no creature can relieve: all are phyſicians of no value; ſome under theſe terrors have thought hell more tolerable, and by a violent hand have thruſt themſelves out of the world into it to avoid theſe gnawings: Yet Jeſus Chriſt can quickly calm theſe myſtical waves alſo, and huſh them with a word; yea, he is the Phyſician, and no other. It is the ſprinkling of his blood, which, like a cooling fomentation, allays thoſe heats within: That blood of ſprinkling ſpeaks peace, when all others have practiſed upon the ſoul to no purpoſe; and the reaſon is, becauſe he is a Perſon in whom God and

man, juſtice and mercy meet and kiſs each other, Eph. ii. 14. And hence faith fetches in peace to the ſoul, Rom. v. 1.

REFLECTION.

Can none appeaſe a troubled conſcience but Chriſt? Then learn, O my ſoul, to underſtand, and daily more and more to ſavour that glorious name, even Jeſus, that delivers not only from the wrath to come, but that which is felt here alſo. O, if the foretaſte of hell be ſo intolerable, if a few drops, let fall on the conſcience in this life, be ſo ſcalding and inſufferable, what is it to have all the vials poured out to eternity, when there ſhall be nothing to divert, mitigate, or allay it?

Here men have ſomewhat to abate thoſe terrors, ſome hopes of mercy, at leaſt a poſſibility; but there is none. O my ſoul! how art thou loaded with guilt! and what a *Magormiſſabib* wouldſt thou be, ſhould God rouze that ſleepy lion in thy boſom! My condition is not at all the better becauſe my conſcience is quiet. Ah! the day is coming when it muſt awake, and will lighten and thunder terribly within me, if I get not into Chriſt the ſooner. O Lord, who knows the power of thy wrath? O let me not carry this guilt out of the world with me, to maintain thoſe everlaſting flames, let me give no ſleep to mine eyes, nor ſlumber to mine eye-lids, till I feel the comfort of that blood of ſprinkling, which alone ſpeaketh peace.

THE POEM.

AMONG the dreadful works of God, I find
No *metaphors* to paint a troubled mind.
I think on this, now that, and yet will neither
Come fully up, though all be put together.
'Tis like the raging ſea that caſts up mire,
Or like to Ætna, breathing ſmoke and fire;
Or like a rouzed lion, fierce and fell;
Or like thoſe furies that do howl in hell.
O conſcience! who can ſtand before thy power,
Endure thy gripes and twinges but an hour?
Stone, gout, ſtrappado, racks, whatever is
Dreadful to ſenſe, is but a toy to this.
No pleaſures, riches, honours, friends can tell
How to give eaſe: In this 'tis like to hell.
Call for the pleaſant timbrel, lute, and harp;
Alas! the muſic howls, the pain's too ſharp
For theſe to charm, divert, or lull aſleep:
Theſe cannot reach it, no, the wound's too deep.
Let all the promiſes before it ſtand,
And ſet a Barnabas at its right hand;
Theſe in themſelves no comfort can afford,
'Tis Chriſt, and none but Chriſt, can ſpeak the word.
And he no ſooner ſpeaks but all is ſtill,
The ſtorm is over, and the mind tranquil.

There goes a pow'r, with his majeſtic voice,
To huſh the dreadful ſtorm, and ſtill its noiſe.
Who would but fear and love this glorious Lord,
That can rebuke ſuch tempeſts with a word?

## CHAP. XXI.

*Our food out of the ſea God doth command;*
*Yet few therein take notice of his hand.*

### OBSERVATION.

THE providence of God in furniſhing us with ſuch plenty and variety of fiſh, is not ſlightly to be paſt over. We have not only ſeveral ſorts of fiſh in our own ſeas, which are caught in their ſeaſons; but from ſeveral parts, eſpecially the weſtern parts of England, many ſail of ſhips are ſent yearly to the American parts of the world; as Newfoundland, New-England, &c. Whence every year is brought home, not only enough to ſupply our own nation, but many thouſand pounds worth alſo yearly returned from Spain, and other countries; by which trade many thouſand families do ſubſiſt.

### APPLICATION.

But now, what returns do we make to heaven for theſe mercies? O what notice is taken of the good hand of Providence, which thus ſupplies and feeds us with the bleſſings of the ſea? I fear there are but few that own, or act in ſubmiſſion to it, and are careful to return, according to received benefit. Men do not conſider, "That their "works are in the hand of God," Eccl. ix. 1. And even thoſe that have the moſt immediate dependence upon Providence, as merchants and ſeamen, yet are very prone to undertake deſigns in the confidence of their own wiſdom and induſtry; not looking higher for the bleſſing, Jam. iv. 13. They often "ſacrifice to their own net, and burn "incenſe to their drag, becauſe by them their portion is fat, and "their meat plenteous," Hab. i. 16. viz. They attribute what is due to God unto the creature: now this is a ſin highly provoking to the Lord; for look in what degree the heart cleaves to the ſecond cauſe, in the ſame degree it departs from the living God, Jer. x. 5.

And how do you think the bleſſed God will take it, to ſee himſelf thus debaſed, and the creature thus exalted into his place; to ſee you carry yourſelves to the creature as to a God, and to the bleſſed God as to a creature. Surely, it is a great and common evil, and ſuch as will blaſt all, if not timely diſcovered and lamented. If we make fleſh our arm, it is juſt with God to wither and dry up the arm. Do we not, my brethren, look upon ſecond cauſes as if they had the main ſtroke in our buſineſs? And with a neglective eye paſs by God, as if he came in but collaterally, and on the bye, into it?

But certainly all endeavours will be unſanctified, if not ſucceſsleſs, in which God is not eyed and engaged.

"It is in vain for you to riſe up early, and ſit up late, and eat the "bread of ſorrows; for ſo he giveth his beloved ſleep," Pſalm cxxxvii. 2. i. e. It is to no purpoſe for men to beat their brains, tire their ſpirits, and rack their conſciences for an eſtate. The true way of acquiring and enjoying the creature, is by ſubmitting quietly to the will of God, in a prudent and diligent, yet moderate uſe of lawful means: Nothing can thrive with us till then.

REFLECTION.

Why then ſhould I diſquiet myſelf in vain; and rob myſelf of my peace, by theſe unbelieving cares and diſtractions? O this hath been my ſin! I have acted, as if my condition had been at my own diſpoſe; I have eyed creatures and means too much, and God too little. How have my hands hanged down with diſcouragement, when ſecond cauſes have diſappeared, or wrought croſs to my deſigns in the world, ready to transfer the fault on this thing, or that! And again, how apt am I to be vainly lifted up in carnal confidence, when I ſee myſelf competently furniſhed with creature munition and proviſion? Oh, what a God-provoking wickedneſs is this! How oft hath providence checked my carnal preſumption, and daſhed many hopeful projects? Yet have I not owned it, as I ought, and ſubmitted to it. Oh, it is a wonder this hath not cloſed the hand of providence againſt me, and pulled down a curſe upon all! Ah Lord, let me now learn, "to ac- "quaint myſelf with thee, then ſhall I decree a thing, and it ſhall "be eſtabliſhed," Job xxii. 28.

THE POEM.

IN all the gifts of God we ſhould advance
His glorious name; not ſay, it came by chance.
Or to the idol of our prudence pay
The tribute of our praiſe, and go our way.
The waves do clap their hands, and in their kind
Acknowledge God; and what! are they more blind
That float upon them? Yea, for what they get
They offer ſacrifices to their net.
This is your manner, thus to work you go:
Confeſs the naked truth; is't not ſo?
This net was wiſely caſt, 'tis full, 'tis full:
O well done mates, this is a gallant pull.
Thus what is due to God, you do apply
Unto yourſelves moſt ſacrilegiouſly.
I cannot wonder ſuch come empty home,
That are ſo full of ſelf and ſin: Yet ſome
I hope look higher, and on God reflect
Due praiſe. A bleſſing ſuch may well expect.

## CHAP. XXII.

*Whilſt thou by art the ſilly fiſh doſt kill,*
*Perchance the devil's hook ſticks in thy gill.*

OBSERVATION.

THERE is ſkill in fiſhing; they that go to ſea in a fiſhing voyage, uſe to go provided with their craft (as they very fitly call it) without which they can do nothing. They have their lines, hooks of ſeveral ſizes, and their bait. They carefully obſerve their ſeaſons; when the fiſh fall in, then they ply their buſineſs day and night.

APPLICATION

But how much more ſkilful and induſtrious is Satan to enſnare and deſtroy ſouls? The devil makes a voyage as well as you; he hath his baits for you, as you have for the fiſh: He hath his devices and wiles to catch ſouls, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Epheſ. vi. 11. He is a ſerpent, an old ſerpent, Rev. xii. 9. Too crafty for man in his perfection, much more in his collapſed and degenerated ſtate, his underſtanding being cracked by the fall, and all his faculties poiſoned and perverted.

Divines obſerve four ſteps, or degrees of Satan's tempting power:

*Firſt*, He can find out the conſtitution-evils of men; he knows to what ſin their natures are more eſpecially prone, and inclinable.

*Secondly*, He can propound ſuitable objects to thoſe luſts, he can exactly and fully hit every man's humour; as Agrippina mixed her poiſon in that meat her huſband loved beſt.

*Thirdly*, He can inject and caſt motions into the mind, to cloſe with thoſe tempting objects; as it is ſaid of Judas, John xiii. 2. "The "devil put it into his heart."

*Fourthly*, He can ſolicit, irritate, and provoke the heart, and by thoſe continual reſtleſs ſolicitations weary it: and hereby he often draws men to commit ſuch things as ſtartled them in the firſt motion.

All this he can do, if he finds the work ſticks, and meets with rubs and difficulties; yet doth he not act to the utmoſt of his ſkill and power, at all times, and with all perſons; neither indeed need he do ſo; the very propounding of an object is enough to ſome, without any further ſolicitation; the devil makes an eaſy conqueſt of them.

And, beſide all this, his policy much appears in the election of place, time, and inſtruments to tempt by: And thus are poor ſouls caught, "as fiſhes in an evil net," Eccleſ. ix. 12. The carnal man is led by ſenſe, as the beaſt; and Satan handles and fits him accordingly. He uſeth all ſorts of motives, not only internal and intellective; but external and ſenſitive alſo; as the ſparkling of the wine, when it gives its colour in the glaſs; the harlot's beauty, whoſe eyelids are ſnares, hiding always the hook, and concealing the iſſue from them. He promiſes them gain and profit, pleaſure and delight, and all that is tempting, with aſſurance of ſecreſy: By theſe he faſtens

the fatal hook in their jaws, and thus they are led captive by him at his will.

REFLECTION.

And is Satan ſo ſubtil and induſtrious to entice ſouls to ſin? Doth he thus caſt out his golden baits, and allure ſouls with pleaſure to their ruin? Then how doth it behove thee, O my ſoul, to be jealous and wary! how ſtrict a guard ſhould I ſet upon every ſenſe! Ah, let me not ſo much regard how ſin comes towards me in the temptation, as how it goes off at laſt. The day in which Sodom was deſtroyed, began with a pleaſant ſun-ſhine, but ended in fire and brimſtone. I may promiſe myſelf much content in the ſatisfaction of my luſts: But O how certainly will it end in my ruin? Ahab doubtleſs promiſed himſelf much content in the vineyard of Naboth, but his blood paid for it in the portion of Jezreel. The harlot's bed was perfumed, to entice the ſimple young man, Prov. vii. 17. But thoſe chambers of delight proved the chambers of death, and her houſe the way to hell. Ah! with what a ſmiling face doth ſin come on towards me in its temptations? how doth it tickle the carnal fancy, and pleaſe the deceived heart? But what a dreadful cataſtrophe and upſhot hath it? The delight is quickly gone; but the guilt thereof remains to amaze and terrify the ſoul with ghaſtly forms, and dreadful repreſentations of the wrath of God. As ſin hath its delights attending it to enter and faſten it, ſo it hath its horrors and ſtings to torment and wound: And as certainly as I ſee thoſe go before it to make a way, ſo certainly ſhall I find theſe follow after, and tread upon its heels. No ſooner is the conſcience awakened, but all thoſe delights vaniſh as a night-viſion, or as a dream when one awakes; and then I ſhall cry, here is the hook, but where is the bait? Here is the guilt and horror, but where the delight that I was promiſed? And I, whither ſhall I now go? Ah, my deceitful luſts! you have enticed and left me in the midſt of all miſeries.

THE POEM.

THERE's ſkill in fiſhing, that the devil knows;
For when for ſouls Satan a fiſhing goes,
He angles cunningly; he knows he muſt
Exactly fit the bait unto the luſt.
He ſtudies conſtitution, place and time,
He gueſſes what is his delight, what thine:
And ſo accordingly prepares the bait,
Whilſt he himſelf lies cloſely hid, to wait
When thou wilt nibble at it. Doſt incline
To drunken meetings? then he baits with wine;
Is this the way? If into this he'll ſmell,
He'll ſhortly pledge a cup of wrath in hell.
To pride or luſt is thy vile nature bent?
An object ſuitable he will preſent.

O think on this! when you caſt in the hook,
Say, Thus for my poor ſoul doth Satan look.
O play not with temptations, do not ſwallow
The ſugar'd bait, conſider what will follow.
If once he hitch thee, then away he draws
Thy captive ſoul cloſe pris'ner in his paws.

## CHAP. XXIII.

*Doth trading fail, and voyages prove bad?*
*If you cannot diſcern the cauſe, 'tis ſad.*

### OBSERVATION.

THERE are many ſad complaints abroad (and, I think, not without cauſe) that trade fails, nothing turns to account. And though all countries are open and free for traffic, a general peace with all nations, yet there ſeems to be a dearth, a ſecret curſe upon trading. You run from country to country, and come loſers home. Men can hardly render a reaſon of it; few hit the right cauſe of this judgment.

### APPLICATION.

That proſperity and ſucceſs in trade are from the bleſſing of God, I ſuppoſe few are ſo *atheiſtical*, as once to deny or queſtion. The devil himſelf acknowledges it, Job i. 10. "Thou haſt bleſſed the work "of his hands, and his ſubſtance is increaſed in the land." It is not in the power of any man to get riches, Deut. viii. 18. "Thou ſhalt "remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to "get wealth." It is his bleſſing that makes good men rich, and his permiſſion that makes wicked men rich. That maxim came from hell, *Quiſque fortunæ ſuæ faber*: Every man is the contriver of his own condition. Certainly, "The good of man is not in his own "hand," Job xxi. 16. "Promotion cometh not from the eaſt nor "the weſt," Pſalm lxxvi. 6, 7.

This being acknowledged, it is evident that in all diſappointments, and want of ſucceſs in our callings, we ought not to ſtick in ſecond cauſes, but to look higher, even to the hand and diſpoſal of God: For whoſe it is to give the bleſſing, his alſo it is to with-hold it. And this is as clear in ſcripture, as the other: It is the Lord that takes away the fiſhes of the ſea, Hoſ. iv. 3. Zeph. i. 3. "It is he that "curſeth our bleſſings," Mal. ii. 3.

This God doth as a puniſhment for ſin, and the abuſe of mercies; and therefore in ſuch caſes we ought not to reſt in general complaints to, or of one another, but ſearch what thoſe ſins are that provoke the Lord to inflict ſuch judgments.

And here I muſt requeſt your patience, to bear a plain, and cloſe word of conviction. My brethren, I am perſuaded theſe are the

ſins, among many others, that provoke the Lord to blaſt all your employments.

1. Our undertaking deſigns without prayer. Alas! how few of us begin with God! intereſt him in our dealings, and aſk counſel and direction at his mouth. Prayer is that which ſanctifies all employments and enjoyments, 1 Tim. iv. 5. The very *heathen* could ſay, *A Jove principium*, They muſt begin with God. O that we had more prayers, and fewer oaths!

2. Injuſtice and fraud in our dealings. A ſin to which merchants are prone, as appears by that expreſſion, Hoſ. xii. 7. This is that which will blaſt all your enjoyments.

3. An over-earneſt endeavour after the world. Men make this their buſineſs, they will be rich: and hence it is, they are not only unmerciful to themſelves, in wearying and waſting their own ſpirits with carking cares, but to ſuch alſo as they employ; neither regarding the ſouls or bodies of men: ſcarce affording them the liberty of the Lord's day, (as has been too common in our Newfoundland employments, or if they have it, yet they are ſo worn out with inceſſant labours, that that precious time is ſpent either in ſleep or idleneſs. It is no wonder God gives you more reſt than you would have, ſince that day of reſt hath been no better improved. This over-doing hath not been the leaſt cauſe of our undoing.

Laſtly, Our abuſe of proſperity, when God gave it, making God's mercies the food and fuel of our luſts. When we had affluence and confluence of outward bleſſings, "this made us kick againſt God," as, Deut. xxxiii. 15. "forget God," Deut. iv. 14. yea, grow proud of our ſtrength and riches, Ezek. xvi. 13. and Jer. ii. 31. Ah! how few of us in the days of our proſperity, behaved ourſelves as good Jehoſhaphat did? 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6. "He had ſilver and gold in abun-"dance, and his heart was lifted up in the way of God's command-"ments;" not in pride and inſolence.

REFLECTION.

Are theſe the ſins that blaſt our bleſſings, and wither our mercies? O then let me ceaſe to wonder it is no better, and rather admire that it is no worſe with me; that my neglect of prayer, injuſtice in dealings, earthly-mindedneſs, and abuſe of former mercies, have not provoked God to ſtrip me naked of all my enjoyments. Let me humbly accept from the Lord the puniſhment of my iniquities, and lay my hand upon my mouth. And O that theſe diſappointments might convince me of the creature's vanity, and cauſe me to drive on another trade for heaven! then ſhall I adore thy wiſdom in rending from me thoſe idolized enjoyments. Ah, Lord! When I had them, my heart was a perpetual drudge to them: how did I then forget God, neglect my duty, and not mind my eternal concernments! Oh, if theſe had not periſhed, in all probability I had periſhed. My God, let my ſoul proſper, and then a ſmall portion of theſe things ſhall afford me more comfort than ever I had in their greateſt abundance.

"A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of ma-
"ny wicked," Pſal. xxxvii. 16.

## THE POEM.

THERE's great complaint abroad that trading's bad,
You ſhake your head, and cry, 'Tis ſad, 'tis ſad.
Merchants lay out their ſtock, ſeamen their pains,
And in their eye they both may keep their gains.
Your fiſhing fails, you wonder why 'tis ſo,
'Tis this (ſaith one) or that; but I ſay—no,
'Twill ne'er be well till you confeſs and ſay,
It is our ſin that frights the fiſh away.
No wonder all goes into bags with holes,
Since ſo the goſpel hath been in your ſouls.
We kick'd like Jeſhurun, when the flowing tide
Of wealth came tumbling in, this nouriſh'd pride.
'Twixt ſoul and body, now I wiſh it may
Fare, as betwixt the Jews and us this day.
O that our outward want and loſs may be
To us a ſoul-enriching poverty!
If diſappointments here advance the trade
For heaven, then complain not; you have made
The richeſt voyage, and your empty ſhips
Return deep laden with ſoul-benefits.

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## CHAP. XXIV.

*In ſeas the greater fiſh the leſs devour:*
*So ſome men cruſh all thoſe within their power.*

### OBSERVATION.

THERE are fiſhes of prey in the ſea, as well as birds and beaſts of prey on the land. Our ſeamen tell us, how the devouring whales, ſharks, dolphins, and other fiſhes, follow the caplein, and other ſmaller fiſh, and devour multitudes of them. It is frequent with us in our own ſeas to find ſeveral ſmaller fiſhes in the bellies of the greater ones; yea, I have often heard ſeamen ſay, that the poor little fry, when purſued, are ſo ſenſible of the danger, that they have ſometimes ſeen multitudes of them caſt themſelves upon the ſhore, and periſh there to avoid the danger of being devoured by them.

### APPLICATION.

Thus cruel, mercileſs, and oppreſſive are wicked men, whoſe "ten-
"der mercies are cruelty," Prov. xxii. 10. We ſee the like cruelty in our extortioners, and over-reaching ſharks aſhore, who grind the faces of the poor, and regard not the cries of the fatherleſs and widows, but fill their houſes with the gain of oppreſſion. Theſe are, by the Holy Ghoſt compared to the fiſhes of the ſea, Hab. i. 13, 14. This is a crying ſin, yea, it ſends up a loud cry to heaven for ven-

geance, Exod. xxii. 23. "If thou afflict the widow and the father-"leſs, and they cry unto me, I will ſurely hear their cry." And ver. 27. "I will hear his cry, for I am gracious." Nay, God will not only hear their cry, but avenge their quarrel. That is a remarkable text, 1 Theſ. iv. 6. "That no man go beyond and defraud his bro-"ther in any matter, becauſe that the Lord is the [avenger] of all "ſuch." This word * *avenger*, is but once more uſed in the *New Teſtament*, Rom. xiii. 4. and there it is applied to the civil magiſtrate, who is to ſee execution done upon offenders. But now this is a ſin that ſometimes may be out of the reach of man's juſtice, and therefore God himſelf will be their avenger. You may over-power the poor in this world, and it may be they cannot contend with you at man's bar, therefore God will bring it before his bar.

Believe it, ſirs, it is a ſin ſo provoking to God, that he will not let it eſcape without ſevere puniſhment, ſooner or later. The prophet Habakkuk, chap. i. ver. 13. wondered how the holy God could forbear ſuch till the general day of reckoning, and that he did not take exemplary vengeance on them in this life. "Thou art of purer eyes "than to behold evil, and canſt not look upon iniquity: wherefore "then lookeſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly, and holdeſt "thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righ-"teous than he?" And Prov. xxiii. 10, 11. "Enter not into the "fields of the fatherleſs," i. e. of the poor and helpleſs. But why is it more dangerous violently to invade their right, than another's? The reaſon is added, "for their Redeemer is mighty, and he ſhall "plead their cauſe with thee." It may be they are not able to retain a counſel to plead their cauſe here; therefore God will plead their cauſe for them.

REFLECTION.

Turn in upon thyſelf (O my ſoul) and conſider, haſt thou not been guilty of this crying ſin? Have I not (when a ſervant) over-reached and defrauded others, and filled my maſter's houſe with violence and deceit? and ſo brought myſelf under that dreadful threatening, Zeph. i. 9. Or ſince I came to trade and deal upon mine own account, have not the balances of deceit been in my hand; I have (it may be) kept many in my ſervice and employment; have not I uſed their labours without reward, and ſo am under that woe? Jer. xxii. 13. or not given them wages proportionable to their work? Iſa. lviii. 3. or by bad payment and unjuſt deductions and allowances, defrauded them of a part of their due? Mal. iii. 5. or at leaſt delayed payment, out of a covetous diſpoſition to gain by it; whilſt their neceſſities in the mean time cried aloud for it; and ſo ſinned againſt God's expreſs commands, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Lev. xix. 30. or have I not perſecuted ſuch as God hath ſmitten? Pſalm. lxix. 26. and rigorouſly exacted the utmoſt of my due, though the hand of God hath gone out

* Ἔκδικος.

againſt them, breaking their eſtates? O my ſoul, examine thyſelf upon theſe particulars: reſt not quiet until this guilt be removed by the application of the blood of ſprinkling. Hath not the Lord ſaid, Jam. ii. 13. "That they ſhall have judgment without mercy, that "have ſhewed no mercy? And is it not a fearful thing to fall "into the hands of the living God, who hath ſaid, He will take ven-"geance for theſe things?"

## THE POEM.

DEVOURING whales, and rav'nous ſharks do follow
The leſſer fry, at one gulp to ſwallow
Some hundreds of them, as our ſeamen ſay:
But we can tell far ſtranger things than they.
For we have ſharks aſhore on ev'ry creek,
That to devour poor men do hunt and ſeek.
No pity, ſenſe, or bowels in them be,
Nay, have they not put off humanity?
Extortioners and cheaters, whom God hates
Have dreadful open mouths, and through thoſe gates
Brave perſons with their heritages paſs
In fun'ral ſtate, friends crying out, alas!
O give me Agur's wiſh, that I may never
Be ſuch myſelf, nor feel the hands of either.
And as for thoſe that in their paws are grip'd,
Pity and reſcue, Lord, from that ſad plight.
When I behold the ſqueaking lark, that's borne
In faulcon's talons, crying, bleeding, torn;
I pity its ſad caſe, and would relieve
The priſoner, if I could, as well as grieve.
Fountain of pity! hear the piteous moans
Of all thy captive and oppreſſed ones.

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## CHAP. XXV.

*In ſtorms to ſpread much ſail endangers all:*
*So carnal mirth, if God for mourning call.*

### OBSERVATION.

IN ſtorms at ſea, the wiſe navigator will not ſpread much ſail; that is the way to loſe maſts and all. They uſe then to furl up the ſails, and lie a hull, when not able to bear a knot of ſail, or elſe to lie a try, or ſcud before the wind and ſeas. It is no time then to hoiſt up the top and top-gallant, and ſhew their bravery.

### APPLICATION.

When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, it is no time then to make mirth, Ezek. xxi. 10. "Should we [then] make mirth?

It contemneth the rod of my ſon as every tree." i. e. As if it were a common rod and ordinary affliction: whereas the rod of my ſon is not ſuch as may be had of every tree; but it is an iron rod to ſuch as deſpiſe it, Pſal. ii. 9. O it is a provoking evil, and commonly God ſeverely puniſhes it. Of all perſons ſuch ſpeed worſt in the common calamity. Amos vi. 1. "Woe to them that are at eaſe in Sion, that "are not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph," as ver. 6. It may be (as one obſerves upon the text) they did not laugh at him, or break jeſts upon him; but they did not condole with him. And what ſhall be their puniſhment? ſee ver. 7. "Therefore now ſhall they go cap-"tive with the firſt that go captive:" God will begin with them firſt. Solomon tells us, Eccleſ. iii. 4. "There is a time to weep, and a "time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance:" 'Only, (as 'Mr Trap notes upon the text) we muſt not invert the order, but 'weep with men, that we may laugh with angels.' To be merry and frolic in a day of tribulation, is to diſturb the order of ſeaſons. That is a terrible text, Iſa. xxii. 12. which ſhould make the hearts of ſuch as are guilty in this kind to tremble: "In that day did the Lord of "hoſts call to mourning, and to girding with ſackcloth: and behold, "joy and gladneſs, ſlaying oxen, killing ſheep, drinking wine," &c. Well, what is the iſſue of this? "Surely, this iniquity ſhall not be "purged from you till ye die." O dreadful word! ſurely (my brethren) ſympathy is a debt we owe to Chriſt myſtical. Whatever our conſtitution, condition, or perſonal immunities be, yet when God calls for mourning, we muſt hear and obey that call. David was a king, an expert muſician, a man of a ſanguine and cheerful conſtitution; yet who more ſenſible of the evil of thoſe times than he? Rivers of water ran down his eyes at the conſideration of them. Melancthon was ſo affected with the miſeries of the church in his days, that he ſeemed to take little or no notice of the death of his child, whom he entirely loved. At ſuch a time we may "ſay of laughter, thou art mad, and "of mirth, what doth it?"

REFLECTION.

Bluſh then, O my ſoul! for thy levity and inſenſibility under God's angry diſpenſations. How many of the precious ſons and daughters of Zion, lie in tearsa broad, while I have been "nouriſhing "my heart as in a day of ſlaughter? The voice of God hath cried "to the city, and men of underſtanding have heard its voice," Micah vi. 9. But I have been deaf to that cry. How loth (my God) have I been to urge my ſenſual heart to acts of ſorrow and mourning! Thou haſt bid me weep with them that weep, but my vain heart cannot comply with ſuch commands. Ah, Lord! If I mourn not with Zion, neither ſhall I rejoice with her.

O, were mine eyes opened, and my heart ſenſible and tender, I might ſee cauſe enough to melt into tears! and like that Chriſtian Niobe, Luke vii. 38. to lie weeping at the feet of Chriſt. Lord, what ſtupidity is this! ſhall I laugh, when thou art angry, and thy

children weeping and trembling? Then I may juſtly fear, leſt "when they ſhall ſing for joy of heart, I ſhall howl for vexation of "ſpirit," Iſa. lxv. 13, 14. Surely, O my ſoul! ſuch laughter will be turned into mourning, either here or hereafter.

THE POEM.

IN troublous times, mirth in the ſinner's face
Is like a mourning-cloak with ſilver lace.
The lion's roaring makes the beaſts to quake:
God's roaring judgments cannot make us ſhake.
What belluine contempt is this of God,
To laugh in's face, when he takes up the rod?
Such laughter God in tears will ſurely drown,
(Unleſs he hate thee) e'er he lay it down.
Theſe rods have voices, if thou hear them well;
If not, another rod's prepar'd in hell;
And when the arm of God ſhall lay it on,
Laugh if thou canſt; no, then thy mirth is gone.
All Zion's children will lament and cry,
When all her beauteous ſtones in duſt do lie?
And he that for her then laments and mourns,
Shall want no joy, when God to her returns.

## CHAP. XXVI.

*A little leak neglected, dangerous proves:*
*One ſin connived at, the ſoul undoes.*

OBSERVATION.

THE ſmalleſt leak, if not timely diſcovered and ſtopt, is enough to ſink a ſhip of the greateſt burden: Therefore ſeamen are wont frequently to try what water is in the hold; and if they find it freſh, and increaſing upon them, they ply the pump, and preſently ſet the carpenters to ſearch for it and ſtop it; and till it be found they cannot be quiet.

APPLICATION.

What ſuch a leak is to a ſhip, that is the ſmalleſt ſin neglected to the ſoul; it is enough to ruin it eternally. For as the greateſt ſin diſcovered, lamented, and mourned over by a believer, cannot ruin him; ſo the leaſt ſin indulged, covered, and connived at, will certainly prove the deſtruction of the ſinner. No ſin, though never ſo ſmall, is tolerated by the pure and perfect law of God, Pſalm cxix. 96. The *command is exceeding broad;* not as if it gave men a latitude to walk as they pleaſe, but *broad*, i. e. extending itſelf to all our words, thoughts, actions, and affections: Laying a law upon them all; conniving at no evil in any man, 1 Pet. ii. 1.

And as the word gives no allowance for the leaſt ſin, ſo it is the

very nature of ſincerity and uprightneſs, to ſet the heart againſt [*every*] way of wickedneſs, Pſalm cxxxix. 23, 24. Job xxxi. 13. and eſpecially againſt that ſin which was its darling in the days of his vanity, Pſalm xviii. 23. True hatred (as the philoſopher obſerves) is of the whole * kind; He that hates ſin as ſin, and ſo doth every upright ſoul, hates all ſins as well as ſome.

Again, the ſoul that hath had a ſaving ſight of Jeſus Chriſt, and a true diſcovery of the evil of ſin, in the glaſs both of the law and goſpel, can account no ſin ſmall. He knows the demerit of the ſmalleſt ſin is God's eternal wrath, and that not the leaſt ſin can be remitted without the ſhedding and application of the blood of Chriſt, Heb. ix. 22. which blood is of infinite value and price, 1 Pet. i. 19.

To conclude, God's people know, that little as well as great ſins, are dangerous, deadly, and deſtructive in their own nature; a little poiſon will deſtroy a man. Adrian was choaked with a gnat, Cæſar ſtabbed with bodkins. A man would think Adam's ſin had been no great matter, yet what dreadful work did it make! It was not as a ſingle bullet to kill himſelf only; but as a chain-ſhot, which cut off all his poor, miſerable poſterity. Indeed, no ſin can be little, becauſe its object againſt whom it is committed is ſo great, whence it receives a kind of infiniteneſs in itſelf; and becauſe the price paid to redeem us from it is ſo invaluable.

REFLECTION.

And is the ſmalleſt ſin not only damning in its own nature, but will certainly prove the ruin of that ſoul that hides and covers it; O then let my ſpirit accompliſh a diligent ſearch. Look to it, O my ſoul! that no ſin be indulged by thee; ſet theſe conſiderations as ſo many flaming ſwords in the way of thy carnal delights and luſts: Let me never ſay of any ſin as Lot did of Zoar, "It is a little one, ſpare "it." Shall I ſpare that which coſt the blood of Jeſus Chriſt? The Lord would not ſpare him, "When he made his ſoul an offering for "ſin," Rom. viii. 32. Neither will he ſpare me, if I defend and hide it, Deut. xxix. 20. Ah! if my heart were right, and my converſation ſound, that luſt, whatever it be, that is ſo favoured by me, would eſpecially be abhorred and hated, Iſa. ii. 20. and xxx. 22. Whatever my convictions and reformations have been, yet if there be but one ſin retained and delighted in, this keeps the devil's intereſt ſtill in my ſoul. And though for a time he ſeem to depart, yet at laſt he will return with ſeven worſe ſpirits, and this is the ſin that will open the door to him, and deliver up my ſoul, Matth. xii. 43, 44. Lord, let me make thorough work of it; let me cut it off, and pluck it out, though it be as a right-hand, or eye. Ah! ſhall I come ſo near the kingdom of God, and make ſuch a fair offer for Chriſt, and yet ſtick at a ſmall matter, and loſe all for want of one thing? Lord, let me

* Εις το γενος.

ſhed the blood of the deareſt luſt for his ſake that ſhed his deareſt blood for me!

## THE POEM.

THERE's many a ſoul eternally undone
For ſparing ſin, becauſe a little one.
But we are much deceiv'd; no ſin is ſmall,
That wounds ſo great a God, ſo dear a ſoul.
Yet ſay it were, the ſmalleſt pen-knife may,
As well as ſword or lance, diſpatch and ſlay,
And ſhall ſo ſmall a matter part and ſever
Chriſt and thy ſoul? What! make you part for ever?
Or wilt thou ſtand on toys with him, when he
Deny'd himſelf in greateſt things for thee?
Or will it be an eaſe in hell to think
How eaſily thy ſoul therein did ſink?
Are Chriſt and hell for trifles ſold and bought?
Strike ſouls with trembling, Lord, at ſuch a thought!
By little ſins belov'd, the ſoul is loſt,
Unleſs ſuch ſins do great repentance coſt.

## CHAP. XXVII.

*Ships make much way when they a trade-wind get;*
*With ſuch a wind the ſaints have ever met.*

### OBSERVATION.

THOUGH in moſt parts of the world the winds are variable, and ſometimes blow from every point of the compaſs, by reaſon whereof ſailing is ſlow and dangerous; yet about the Equinoctial, ſeamen meet with a trade-wind blowing, for the moſt part one way; and there they ſail jocund before it, and ſcarce need to lower a top-ſail for ſome hundreds of leagues.

### APPLICATION.

Although the people of God meet with many ſeeming rubs and ſet-backs in their way to heaven, which are likely contrary winds to a ſhip; yet are they from the day of their converſion to the day of their complete ſalvation, never out of a trade-wind's way to heaven. Rom. viii. 21. "We know that all things work together for good to "them that love God, to them that are called according to his pur-"poſe." This is a moſt precious ſcripture, pregnant with its conſolation to all believers in all conditions, a pillar of comfort to all diſtreſſed ſaints: Let us look a little nearer to it.

*(We know)* Mark the certainty and evidence of the propoſition, which is not built upon a gueſs or remote probability, but upon the knowledge of the ſaints; *we know it*, and that partly by Divine reve-

lation, God has told us ſo; and partly by our own experience we find it ſo.

*(That all things)* Not only things that lie in a natural and direct tendency to our good; as *ordinances, promiſes, bleſſings, &c.* but even ſuch things as have no natural fitneſs and tendency to ſuch an end; as *afflictions, temptations, corruptions, deſertions, &c.* all theſe help onward. They

*(Work together)* Not all of them directly, and of their own nature and inclination; but by being over-ruled and determined to ſuch an iſſue by the gracious hand of God: Nor yet do they work out ſuch good to the ſaints ſingly and apart, but as adjuvant cauſes or helps, ſtanding under, and working in ſubordination to the ſupreme and principal cauſe of their happineſs.

Now, the moſt ſeeming oppoſite things, yea, ſin in itſelf, which in its own nature is really oppoſite to their good, yet eventually contributes to it. Afflictions and deſertions ſeem to work againſt us, but being once put into the rank and order of cauſes, they work together with ſuch bleſſed inſtruments, as word and prayer to an happy iſſue. And though the faces of theſe things that ſo agree and work together, look contrary ways; yet there are, as it were, ſecret chains and connexions of providence betwixt them, to unite them in their iſſue. There may be many inſtruments employed about one work, and yet not communicate counſels, or hold intelligence with each other. Joſeph's brethren, the Midianites, Potiphar, &c. knew not one another's mind, nor aimed at one end, (much leſs the end that God brought about by them) one acts out of revenge, another for gain, a third out of policy; yet all meet together at laſt, in that iſſue God had deſigned to bring about by them, even Joſeph's advancement. Even ſo it is here, Chriſtian, there are more inſtruments at work for thine eternal good than thou art aware of.

REFLECTION.

Cheer up then, O my ſoul, and lean upon this pillar of comfort in all diſtreſſes. Here is a promiſe for me, if I am a called one; that, like the philoſopher's ſtone, turns all into gold it toucheth. This promiſe is my ſecurity; however things go in the world, my God "will do me no hurt," Jer. xxv. 6. Nay, he will do me good by every diſpenſation. "O that I had but an heart to make all things "work for his glory, that thus cauſeth every thing to work for my "good." My God, doſt thou turn every thing to my advantage? O let me return all to thy praiſe; and if by every thing thou work my eternal good, then let me in every thing give thanks.

But ah! how fooliſh and ignorant have I been? even as a beaſt before thee. How hath my heart been diſquieted, and apt to repine at thy diſpenſations, when they have croſſed my will? not conſidering that my God faithfully purſues my good, even in thoſe things that croſs, as well as in that which pleaſes me.

Bleſſed Lord! what a bleſſed condition are all thy people in, who

are within the line of this promiſe? All things friendly and beneficial to them; friends helpful; enemies helpful; every thing conſpiring, and conducing to their happineſs. With others it is not ſo; nothing works for their good; nay, every thing works againſt it: their very mercies are ſnares, and their proſperity deſtroys them; Prov. i. 32. even the bleſſed goſpel itſelf is a ſavour of death to them: when evil befals them, "it is an only evil," Ezek. vii. 5. that is, not turned into good to them; and as their evils are not turned into good, ſo all their good is turned into evil. As this promiſe hath an influence into all that concerns the people of God, ſo the curſe hath an influence into all the enjoyments of the wicked. O my ſoul, bleſs the Lord, who hath caſt thy lot into ſuch a pleaſant place, and given thee ſuch a glorious heritage, as this promiſe is.

## THE POEM.

WHEN once the dog-ſtar riſes, many ſay,
Corn ripens then apace, both night and day.
Souls once in Chriſt, that morning-ſtar lets fall
Such influences on them, that all
God's diſpenſations to them then, ſweet or ſour,
Ripen their ſouls for glory ev'ry hour.
All their afflictions, rightly underſtood,
Are bleſſings; ev'ry wind will blow ſome good.
Sure at their troubles ſaints would never grudge,
Were ſenſe deſpoſed, and faith made the judge.
Falls make them warier, amend their pace;
When gifts puff up their hearts, and weaken grace.
Could Satan ſee the iſſue, and th' event
Of his temptations, he would ſcarcely tempt.
Could ſaints but ſee what fruits their troubles bring,
Amidſt thoſe troubles they would ſhout and ſing.
O ſacred wiſdom! who can but admire
To ſee how thou doſt ſave from fire, by fire!
No doubt but ſaints in glory wond'ring ſtand
At thoſe ſtrange methods few now underſtand.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

*Storms make diſcov'ry of the pilot's ſkill:*
*God's wiſdom in affliction triumphs ſtill.*

### OBSERVATION.

IN fair weather, when there is ſea-room enough, then every common perſon can guide the ſhip; the pilot may then lie down and take his reſt; but in great ſtorms and ſtreſs of weather, or when near the dangerous ſhore, then the moſt ſkilful pilot is put to it; then he

ſhews the utmoſt of his art and ſkill, and yet ſometimes all is too little. They are (as the ſcripture ſpeaks) *at their wit's end*, know not what to do more; but are forced to commit all to the mercy of God and the ſeas.

APPLICATION.

In the ſtorms and tempeſts of affliction and trouble, there are the moſt evident and full diſcoveries of the wiſdom and power of our God: it is indeed continually active for his people in all conditions, Iſa. xxvii. 3. "Leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Pſal. cxxi. 4. "He that keepeth Iſrael neither ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth." His people's dangers are without intermiſſion, therefore his preſervations are ſo too. But now, when they come into the *ſtrait* of affliction and deadly dangers, which threatens like rocks on every ſide; now the wiſdom of their God rides triumphantly and viſibly upon the waves of that ſtormy ſea: and this infinite wiſdom is then eſpecially diſcovered in theſe particulars.

1. In leaving them ſtill ſomewhat in the lieu and room of thoſe comforts that they are deprived of; ſo that they ſee God doth exchange their comforts, and that for the better; and this ſupports them. So John xiv. 1, 2, 3. Chriſt's bodily preſence is removed, but the Spirit was ſent in the room of it, which was better.

2. In doubling their ſtrength, as he doubles their burdens. It is obſerved that the ſaints have many times very ſtrong and ſweet conſolation, a little before their greateſt trials: and this is ſo ordinary, that commonly when they have had their extraordinary conſolations from God, they have then looked for ſome eminent trial. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and ſealed the covenant to him, and then put him upon that great trial of his faith. So the diſciples, Luke xxiv. 49. it was commanded them that they "ſhould tarry in Jeruſalem till they "were endowed with power from on high." The Lord knew what a hard providence they were like to have, and what great oppoſitions and difficulties they muſt encounter in publiſhing the everlaſting goſpel to the world; and therefore firſt prepares and endows them with power from on high, viz. with eminent meaſures of the gifts and graces of the Spirit; as faith, patience, ſelf-denial, &c. So Paul had firſt his revelations, then his buffetings.

3. In coming in ſo opportunely in the time of their great diſtreſs, with relief and comfort, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "Then the Spirit of glory and "of God reſteth on them." As that martyr cried out to his friend Auſtin, at the very ſtake, *He is come, he is come.*

4. In appointing and ordering the ſeveral kinds of afflictions to ſeveral ſaints; and alloting to every one that very affliction, and no other, which is moſt ſuitable to his condition: which afflictions, like ſo many potions of phyſic, are prepared for that very malignant humour that predominates moſt in them. Peter's ſin was ſelf-confidence, God permits him to fall by denying Chriſt; which doubtleſs was ſanctified to his good in that particular. Hezekiah's ſin was

vain-glory, therefore ſpoilers are ſent to take away his treaſures.

5. In the duration of their troubles, they ſhall not ly always upon them, Pſalm cxxv. 3. Our God is a God of judgment, Iſa. xxx. 18. Knows the due time of removing it, and is therein punctual to a day, Rev. ii. 10.

REFLECTION.

If the wiſdom of God do thus triumph, and glorify itſelf in the diſtreſſes of the ſaints, then why ſhould I fear in the day of evil? Pſalm xlix. 4. Why doth my heart faint at the foreſight and apprehenſion of approaching trouble? Fear none of thoſe things that thou ſhalt ſuffer, O my ſoul; if thy God will thus be with thee in the fire and water, thou canſt not periſh. Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, yet let me fear no evil, whilſt my God is thus with me. Creatures cannot do what they pleaſe, his wiſdom limits and over-rules them all to gracious and ſweet ends. If my God caſt me into the furnace to melt and try me, yet I ſhall not be conſumed there; for he will ſit by the furnace himſelf all the while I am in it, and curiouſly pry into it, obſerving when it hath done its work, and then will preſently withdraw the fire. O my ſoul, bleſs and adore this God of wiſdom! who himſelf will ſee the ordering of all thine afflictions, and not truſt it in the hands of men or angels.

THE POEM.

THOUGH toſt in greateſt ſtorms, I'll never fear,
If Chriſt will ſit at th' helm to guide and ſteer:
Storms are the triumph of his ſkill and art;
He cannot cloſe his eyes, nor change his heart.
Wiſdom and power ride upon the waves,
And in the greateſt danger helps and ſaves.
From dangers it by dangers doth deliver,
And wounds the devil out of his own quiver;
It countermines his plots, and ſo doth ſpoil,
And make his engines on himſelf recoil.
It blunts the politician's reſtleſs tool,
And makes Ahithophel the verieſt fool;
It ſhews us how our reaſon us miſled,
And if he had not we had periſhed.
Lord, to thy wiſdom I will give the reins,
And not with cares perplex and vex my brains.

## CHAP. XXIX.

*Things in the bottom are unſeen: no eye*
*Can trace God's paths, which in the deeps do lie.*

OBSERVATION.

THE ocean is ſo deep, that no eye can diſcover what lies in the bottom thereof. We uſe to ſay, proverbially, of a thing that

is irrecoverably loſt, it is as good it were caſt into the ſea. What lies there lies obſcure from all eyes but the eyes of God.

APPLICATION.

Thus are the judgments of God and the ways of his providence profound and unſearchable, Pſal. xxxvi. 6. "Thy righteouſneſs is like "the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep;" i. e. his providences are ſecret, obſcure, and unfathomable; but even then, and in thoſe providences, his righteouſneſs ſtands up like the great mountains, viſible and apparent to every eye. Though the ſaints cannot ſee the one, yet they can clearly diſcern the other, Jer. xii. 1. Jeremiah was at a ſtand; ſo was Job in the like caſe, Job xii. 7. So was Aſaph, Pſal. lxxiii. and Habakkuk, chap. i. 3. Theſe wheels of providence are dreadful for their height, Ezek. i. 18. There be deep myſteries of providence, as well as of faith. It may be ſaid of ſome of them, as of Paul's epiſtles, That they *are hard to be underſtood*, darkneſs and clouds are round about the throne of God: no man can ſay what will be the particular iſſue and event of ſome of his diſpenſations. Luther ſeemed to hear God ſay to him when he was importunate to know his mind in ſome particular providence, *Deus ſum, non ſequax:* I am a God not to be traced. Sometimes providences, like Hebrew letters, muſt be read backward, Pſal. xcii. 7. Some providences poſe men of the greateſt parts and graces. "His way is in the ſea, his "paths in the great waters, and his footſteps are not known," Pſal. lxxvii. 19. Who can trace foot-ſteps in the bottom of the ſea? "The angels," Ezek. i. "have their hands under their wings." The hand is either, *ſymbolum roboris*, The ſymbol of ſtrength, or *inſtrumentum operationis*, The inſtrument of action: where theſe hands are put forth, they work effectually, but very ſecretly; they are hid under their wings. There be ſome of God's works that are ſuch ſecrets, as that they may not be enquired into; they are to be believed and adored, but not pryed into, Rom. xi. 33. Others that may be enquired after, but yet are ſo profound, that few can underſtand them, Pſal. cxi. 2. "The works of the Lord are great, ſought "out of all thoſe that have pleaſure therein." When we come to heaven, then all thoſe myſteries, as well in the works as in the word of God, will lie open to our view.

REFLECTION.

O then, why is my heart diſquieted, becauſe it cannot ſometimes diſcern the way of the Lord, and ſee the connection and dependence of his providential diſpenſations? Why art thou ſo perplexed, O my ſoul, at the confuſions and diſorders that are in the world! I know that goodneſs and wiſdom ſits at the ſtern: and though the veſſel of the church be toſſed and diſtreſſed in ſtorms of trouble, yet it ſhall not periſh. Is it not enough for me that God hath condeſcended ſo far for my ſatisfaction, as to ſhew me plainly the ultimate and general iſſue of all theſe myſterious providences, Eph. i. 22. Rom. viii. 28, unleſs I be able to take the height of every particular, ſhall I preſume

to call the God of heaven to account? Muſt he render a reaſon of his ways, and give an account of his matters to ſuch a worm as I am? Be ſilent (O my ſoul) before the Lord, ſubſcribe to his wiſdom, and ſubmit to his will whatſoever he doth. However it be, yet God is good to Iſrael; the event will manifeſt it to be all over a deſign of love. I know not how to reconcile them to each other, or many of them to the promiſe; yet are they all harmonious betwixt themſelves, and the certain means of accompliſhing the promiſes. O what a favour is this, that in the midſt of the greateſt confuſions in the world, God hath given ſuch abundant ſecurity to his people, that it ſhall be well with them? Amos ix. 8. Eccleſ. viii. 12.

## THE POEM.

LORD! how ſtupendous, deep, and wonderful
Are all thy draughts of providence! So full
Of puzzling intricacies, that they lie
Beyond the ken of any mortal eye.
*A wheel within a wheel's* the ſcripture notion,
And all thoſe wheels tranſverſe, and croſs in motion.
All creatures ſerve it in their place; yet ſo,
As thouſands of them know not what they do.
At this or that their aim they do direct;
But neither this nor that is the effect:
But ſomething elſe they do not underſtand,
Which ſets all politicians at a ſtand.
Deep counſels at the birth this hand doth break,
And deeper things performeth by the weak.
Men are, like horſes, ſet at ev'ry ſtage,
For providence to ride from age to age;
Which, like a poſt, ſpurs on, and makes them run
From ſtage to ſtage, until their journey's done;
Then take a freſh: but they the bus'neſs know,
No more than horſes the poſt-letters do.
Yet tho' its work be not conceal'd from ſight,
'Twill be a glorious piece when brought to light.

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## CHAP. XXX.

*Millions of men are ſunk into the main;*
*But it ſhall not thoſe dead always retain.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHAT multitudes of men hath the ſea devoured! thouſands have made their graves in it. What numbers of men have been ingulphed together in ſea-fights, or ſtorms, or inundations, whereby whole towns have been ſwallowed up! certainly the dead which are there, are innumerable.

APPLICATION.

But though the ſea has received ſo many thouſand bodies of men into its devouring throat, yet it is not the abſolute lord or proprietor of them, but rather a ſteward intruſted with them, till the Lord require an account of them; and then it muſt deliver up all it hath received, even to a perſon. Rev. xx. 11, 12. "And I ſaw the dead, "ſmall and great, ſtand before God: And the books were opened; "and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the "dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the "book according to their works. And the ſea gave up the dead "which were in it."

The doctrine of the reſurrection of the body is a doctrine full of ſingular conſolations to believers, 1 Cor. xv. and moſt clearly aſſerted in ſcripture, Acts xxvi. 8. Job xix. 25. 1 Cor. xv. &c. And it is well for us this point is ſo plainly revealed; becauſe as it is a moſt comfortable truth to the people of God, ſo there is ſcarce any truth that lies under more prejudice, as to ſenſe or reaſon, and is more difficult to receive than this is. The Epicures and Stoics laughed Paul to ſcorn when he preached it to them, Acts xvii. 32. The Familiſts and Quakers at this day reject it as a fable. The Socinians ſay the ſame body ſhall not riſe, but an aerial body. And, indeed, if men ſet up reaſon as the only judge of ſupernatural things, it is incredible to think, that a body ſhould be reſtored that hath been burnt to aſhes, and thoſe aſhes ſcattered in the wind; as hiſtory tells us was frequently done by the bodies of the ſaints in Dioclefian's reign! or when drowned in the ſea, and there devoured by ſeveral fiſhes, and thoſe again devoured by others. But yet this is not to be objected to the almighty power of God, that gave them their firſt being: difficulties and impoſſibilities are for men, but not for him. "Why ſhould "it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe "the dead?" Acts xxvi. 8.

REFLECTION.

And muſt I riſe again where-ever my body falls at death? Then, Lord, how am I concerned to get union with Chriſt while I live? By virtue thereof only my reſurrection can be made comfortable and bleſſed to me. Ah! let my body lie where it will, in earth or ſea; let my bones be ſcattered, and fleſh devoured by worms or fiſh, I know thou canſt, and wilt re-unite my ſcattered parts; and in this body I muſt ſtand before thine awful tribunal, to receive according to what I have done therein, 2 Cor. v. 10. Thou that commandeſt me to ſtand forth amongſt the nobleſt rank of creatures, when I had no being, and ſaweſt my ſubſtance, being yet imperfect, canſt as eaſily reduce me to that being again.

What tho' reaſon vote it impoſſible, and ſenſe incredible? Though all theſe difficulties and incumbrances grow upon my faith, yet I know my body is not loſt for ever; the ſound of thy laſt and dreadful

trumpet, ſhall awaken me; and thy mighty power, to which all things are poſſible, ſhall bring me before thy bar.

O Lord, I know that I ſhall ſtand in that great aſſembly at the laſt day, when multitudes, multitudes, even all the ſons and daughters of Adam, ſhall appear together. O if I die chriſtleſs, it were good for me that there were no reſurrection; for then thoſe eyes that have been windows of luſt, muſt behold Chriſt the Judge, not as a Redeemer, but as a Revenger. That tongue that hath vented ſo much of the filthineſs of my heart, will then be ſtruck ſpeechleſs before him; and this fleſh which I ſo pampered and provided for, condemned to everlaſting flames. O my God, let me make ſure work for ſuch a day! if I now get real union with thy Son, I ſhall awake with ſinging out of the duſt; and then, as thou ſaidſt to Jacob, ſo to me, when I go down into the ſea, or grave, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4. "Fear not to go "down into the deep; for I will ſurely bring thee up again."

## THE POEM.

IT ſhould not ſeem incredible to thee,
That God ſhould raiſe the dead in ſeas that be:
We ſee in winter, ſwallows, worms, and flies
Depriv'd of life, yet in the ſpring they riſe.
What tho' your bodies ſev'ral fiſh devour,
Object not that to the Almighty pow'r.
Some chymiſts in their art are ſo exact,
That from one herb they uſually extract
Four diff'rent elements; what think ye then
Can poſe that God who gave this ſkill to men?
The gard'ner can diſtinguiſh thirty kinds
Of ſeeds from one another, tho' he finds
Them mix'd together in the ſelf-ſame diſh;
Much more can God diſtinguiſh fleſh from fiſh.
They ſeem as loſt, but they again muſt live;
The ſea's a ſteward, and ſtewards account muſt give.
Look what you are, when in the ocean drown'd,
The very ſame at judgment you'll be found.
I would not care where my vile body lies,
Were I aſſur'd it ſhould with comfort riſe.

## CHAP. XXXI.

*The ſeaman's greateſt danger's near the coaſt;*
*When we are neareſt heav'n, the danger's moſt.*

### OBSERVATION.

THOUGH ſeamen meet with violent ſtorms, yet if they have ſea-room enough, they are not much diſmayed: but if they find themſelves near the ſhore, they look upon their condition as

very dangerous: the ſight of the ſhore is to them (as Solomon ſpeaks of the morning in another caſe) like the ſhadow of death, if not able to weather it. For one ſhip ſwallowed up in the ocean, many periſh upon the coaſt.

APPLICATION.

The greateſt ſtraits and difficulties that many ſaints meet with in all their lives, is when they come neareſt to heaven, and have almoſt finiſhed their courſe. Heaven indeed is a glorious place, the ſpacious and royal manſion of the Great King; but *difficilia quæ pulchra*; it hath a ſtrait and narrow entrance, Luke xiii. 24. O the difficulty of arriving there! how many hard tugs in duty, what earneſt contention and ſtriving even to an agony! as that word imports, Luke xiii. 24. Multitudes put forth, and by profeſſion are bound for this *fair haven*: but of the multitudes that put out, how few do arrive there? A man may ſet out by a glorious profeſſion with much reſolution, and continue long therein; he may offer very fair for it, and not be far from the kingdom of God, and yet not be able to enter at the laſt, Mat. vii. 22.

Yea, and many of thoſe who are ſincere in their profeſſion, and do arrive at laſt, yet come to heaven (as I may ſay) by the gates of hell; and put in, as a poor weather-beaten veſſel comes into the harbour, more like a wreck than a ſhip, neither maſt nor ſail left. The righteous themſelves are ſcarcely ſaved, i. e. they are ſaved with very much difficulty. They have not all an *abundant entrance*, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 Pet. i. 11.

'Some perſons (as * one well notes) are *afar off*, Eph. ii. 23. i. e. 'touched with no care of religion: ſome come near, but never en-'ter as ſemi-converts. See Matth. xii. 34. Others enter, but with 'great difficulty, they are ſaved as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Make an 'hard ſhift. But then there are ſome that go in with full ſail be-'fore the wind, and have an abundant entrance; they go triumph-'ing out of the world." Ah! when we come into the narrow channel, at the very point of entrance into life, the ſoul is then in the moſt ſerious frame: all things look with a new face; conſcience ſcans our evidence moſt critically; then, alſo, Satan falls upon us, and makes his ſoreſt aſſaults and batteries. It is the laſt encounter; if they eſcape him now, they are gone out of his reach for ever: and if he cannot hinder their ſalvation, yet if he can but cloud their evening, and make them go groaning and howling out of the world, he reaches another end by it, even to confirm and prejudice the wicked, and weaken the hands of others that are looking towards religion.

REFLECTION.

If this be ſo, how inevitable is my perdition, may the careleſs ſoul ſay? If they that ſtrive ſo much, and go ſo far, yet periſh at laſt; and if the righteous themſelves are ſcarcely ſaved, then where ſhall ſuch

* Manton on Jude. p. 119.

an ungodly creature as I appear? O Lord! if they that have made religion their buſineſs, and have been many years purſuing a work of mortification, have gone mourning after the Lord Jeſus, and walked humbly with God; yet if ſome of theſe have ſuch an hard tug at laſt, then what will become of ſuch a vain, ſenſual, careleſs, fleſh-pleaſing wretch as I have been?

Again, Do ſaints find it ſo ſtrait an entrance? Then, though I have well grounded hopes of ſafe arrival at laſt; yet let me look to it, that I do not increaſe the difficulty. Ah! they are the things that are now done, or omitted, that put conſcience into ſuch an agony then; for then it comes to review the life with the moſt ſerious eye. O let me not ſtick my death-bed full of thorns, againſt I come to lie down upon it. O that I may turn to the wall in that hour, as Hezekiah did, 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. and ſay, "Remember now, O "Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect "heart," &c.

## THE POEM.

AFTER a tedious paſſage, ſaints deſcry
The glorious ſhore, ſalvation being nigh:
Death's long-boat's launch'd, ready to ſet aſhore
Their panting ſouls. O how they tug at oar,
Longing to be at reſt! but then they find
The hardeſt tug of all is yet behind.
Juſt at the harbour's mouth they ſee the wreck
Of ſouls there caſt away, and driven back.
A world of dang'rous rocks before it lie;
The harbour's barr'd, and now the winds blow high;
Thoughts now ariſe, fears multiply apace;
All things above them have another face.
Life blazes, juſt like an expiring light,
The ſoul's upon the lip prepar'd for flight.
Death, till the reſurrection, tears and rends,
Out of each other's arms two parting friends,
The ſoul and body. Ah! but more than ſo,
The devil falls upon them ere they go,
With new temptations, back'd with all his pow'r,
And ſcruples kept on purpoſe for that hour.
This is the laſt encounter, now, or never;
If he ſucceedeth now, they're gone for ever.
Thus in they put, with hardſhip at the laſt,
As ſhips out of a ſtorm, nor ſail, nor maſt:
Yet ſome go in before a wind, and have
Their ſtreamer of aſſurance, flying brave.
Lord, give me eaſier entrance, if thou pleaſe;
Or if I may not there arrive with eaſe,
Yet I beſeech thee, ſet me ſafe aſhore,
Tho' ſtormy winds at harbour's mouth ſhould roar.

## CHAP. XXXII.

*How glad are ſeamen when they make the ſhore?*
*And ſaints, no leſs, when all their danger's o'er.*

### OBSERVATION.

WHAT joy is there among ſeamen, when at laſt, after a tedious and dangerous voyage, they deſcry land, and ſee the deſired haven before them? Then they turn out of their loathed cabins, and come upon open deck with much joy. Pſal. cvii. 30. "Then "they are glad, becauſe they be quiet: So he bringeth them to their "deſired haven." Now they can reflect with comfort upon the many dangers they have paſt, *Olim hæc meminiſſe juvabit;* it is ſweet to recount them.

### APPLICATION.

But O what a tranſcendent joy, yea, raviſhing, will over-run the hearts of ſaints, when, after ſo many conflicts, temptations, and afflictions, they arrive in glory, and are harboured in heaven, where they ſhall reſt for ever! 2 Theſſ. i. 7. The ſcripture ſaith, "They ſhall "ſing the ſong of Moſes, and of the Lamb," Rev. xv. 3. The ſong of Moſes was a triumphant ſong, compoſed for the celebration of that glorious deliverance at the red ſea. The ſaints are now fluctuating upon a troubleſome and tempeſtuous ſea; their hearts ſometimes ready to ſink, and die within them, at the apprehenſion of ſo many and great dangers and difficulties. Many a hard ſtorm they ride out, and many ſtraits and troubles they here encounter with, but at laſt they arrive at their deſired and long-expected haven, and then heaven rings and reſounds with their joyful acclamations. And how can it be otherwiſe, when as ſoon as ever they ſet foot upon that glorious ſhore, Chriſt himſelf meets and receives them with a "Come ye bleſſed of "my Father," Matth. xxv. 34. O joyful voice! O much deſired word! ſaith Paræus, what tribulation would not a man undergo for this word's ſake!

Beſides, then they are perfectly freed from all evils, whether of ſin or ſuffering, and perfectly filled with all deſired good. Now they ſhall join with that great aſſembly, in the high praiſes of God. O what a day will this be! If (ſaid a *worthy divine) Diagoras died away with an exceſs of joy, whilſt he embraced his three ſons that were crowned as victors in the Olympic games in one day: and good old Simeon, when he ſaw Chriſt but in a body ſubject to the infirmities of our nature, cried out, "Now let thy ſervant depart in "peace;" what unſpeakable joy will it be to the ſaints, to behold Chriſt in his glory, and ſee their godly relations alſo (to whoſe converſion, perhaps, they have been inſtrumental) all crowned, in one day, with everlaſting diadems of bliſs! and if the ſtars did, as Ig-

* Morning Exerciſe, p. 651.

natius' ſaith, make a choir, as it were, about that ſtar that appeared at Chriſt's incarnation, and there is ſuch joy in heaven at the converſion of a ſinner; no wonder, then, the morning ſtars ſing together, and the ſons of God ſhout for joy, when the general aſſembly meet in heaven. O how will the arches of heaven ring and echo, when the high praiſes of God ſhall be in the mouth of ſuch a congregation! then ſhall the ſaints be joyful in glory, and ſing aloud upon their beds of everlaſting reſt.

REFLECTION.

And is there ſuch a day approaching for the ſons of God, indeed! and have I [*authority*] to call myſelf one of the number! John i. 12. O then let me not droop at preſent difficulties, nor hang down my hands when I meet with hardſhips in the way. O my ſoul, what a joyful day will this be! for at preſent we are toſſed upon an ocean of troubles, fears, and temptations; but theſe will make heaven the ſweeter.

Cheer up, then, O my ſoul, thy ſalvation is now nearer than when thou firſt believedſt, Rom. xiii. 11. and it will not now be long ere I receive the end of my faith, 1 Pet. i 9. and then it will be ſweet to reflect even upon theſe hardſhips in the way. Yet a few days more, and then comes that bleſſed day thou haſt ſo long waited and panted for. Oppoſe the glory of that day, O my ſoul, to thy preſent abaſures and ſufferings, as bleſſed Paul did, Rom. i. 18. and thou ſhalt ſee how it will ſhrink them all up to nothing; oppoſe the inheritance thou ſhalt receive in that day, to thy loſſes for Chriſt now; and ſee how joyfully it will make thee bear them, Heb. x. 34. oppoſe the honour that will be put upon thee in that day, to thy preſent reproaches, and ſee how eaſy it will make them to thee, 1 Cor. iv. 5. What condition can I be in, wherein the believing thoughts of this bleſſed day cannot relieve me?

Am I poor, here is that which anſwers poverty: James iii. 5. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God choſen the poor of "this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?"

Am I tempted? here is relief againſt that: Rev. xii. 16. "Now "is come ſalvation and ſtrength; for the accuſer of our brethren is "caſt down," *&c.*

Am I deſerted? here is a remedy for that too, Rev. xxii. 5. "And "there ſhall be no night there," *&c.* Come, then, my ſoul, let us enter upon our inheritance by degrees, and begin the life of heaven upon earth.

## THE POEM.

WHEN Solomon in Iſrael firſt was king,
Heaven's arches, earth's foundations, ſeem'd to ring
With joyful exclamations! How much more
Will heav'n reſound, when ſaints are come a-ſhore!

How will the raviſh'd ſouls tranſported be
At the firſt glimpſe of Chriſt! whom they ſhall ſee
In all his glory; and ſhall live and move,
Like ſalamanders, in the fire of love.
A flood of tears convey'd them to the gate
Where endleſs joys receiv'd them. Now the date
Of all their ſorrow's out; henceforth they walk
In robes of glory. Now there's no more talk
Of fears, temptations, of that ſnare or this:
No ſerpent in that paradiſe doth hiſs.
No more deſertions, troubled thoughts, or tears;
Chriſt's full enjoyment ſuperſedes thoſe fears.
Delights of princes courts are all but toys
To theſe delights, theſe are tranſcendent joys,
The joys of Chriſt himſelf; of what they are,
An angel's tongue would ſtammer to declare.
Were our conceptions clear, did their tongues go
Unto their *Ela*, yet the note's too low.
What! paint the ſun too bright! it cannot be;
Sure heaven ſuffers no hyperbole.
My thoughts are ſwallow'd up, my muſe doth tire,
And hang her wings, conception ſoars no higher.
Give me a place among thy children there,
Altho' I lie with them in dungeon here.

## *A CONCLUDING SPEECH.*

I Have now done, and am looking to heaven for a bleſſing upon theſe weak labours; what uſe you will make of them, I know not, but this I know, that the day is coming, when God will reckon with you for this, and all other helps and means afforded to you: and if it be not improved by you, be ſure it will be produced as a witneſs againſt you. Sirs, I beg you, in the name of Chriſt, before whom both you and I muſt ſhortly appear, that you receive not theſe things in vain. Did I know what other lawful means to uſe that might reach your hearts, they ſhould not be in vain to you; but I cannot do God's part of the work, nor yours: only I requeſt you all, both maſters, common men, and all others into whoſe hands this ſhall come, that you will lay to heart what you read; pray unto him that hath the key of the houſe of David, that openeth and no man ſhutteth, to open your hearts to give entertainment to theſe truths. Alas! if you apply it not to yourſelves, I have laboured to no purpoſe; the pen of the ſcribe is in vain: but God may make ſuch an application of them, in one ſtorm or another, as may make your hearts to tremble. Oh, ſirs! when death and eternity look you in the face, conſcience may reflect upon theſe things to your horror and amazement, and make you cry out, as Prov. v. 12, 13 "How have I hated knowledge, and my heart deſpiſed reproof

« and have not obeyed the voice of my teacher, nor inclined my ears « to them that inſtructed me?" And O what a dreadful ſhriek will ſuch ſouls give, when the Lord opens their eyes to ſee that miſery that they are here warned of! But if the Lord ſhall bleſs theſe things to your converſion, then we may ſay to you, as Moſes did to Zebulun, the mariners tribe, Deut. xxxiii. 12. "Rejoice Zebulun in thy « going out." The Lord will be with you, which way ſoever you turn yourſelves; and being in the boſom of the covenant, you are ſafe in the midſt of all dangers. O thou, that art the Father of ſpirits, that formedſt and canſt eaſily reform the heart, open thou the blind eye, unſtop the deaf ear, let the word take hold upon the heart. If thou wilt but ſay the word, theſe weak labours ſhall proſper, to bring home many loſt ſouls unto thee. *Amen.*

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A Pathetical and Serious

# DISSUASIVE

FROM THE

Horrid and deteſtable SINS of Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Uncleanneſs, forgetfulneſs of Mercies, Violation of Promiſes, and atheiſtical Contempt of Death.

Applied by way of CAUTION to SEAMEN, and now added as an APPENDIX to their NEW COMPASS.

Being an ESSAY toward their much-deſired Reformation, fit to be ſeriouſly recommended to their profane Relations, whether Seamen or others, by all ſuch as unfeignedly deſire their eternal Welfare.

To the right worſhipful Sir JOHN FREDERICK, Kt, one of the worſhipful Aldermen of the City of London, and their honourable BURGESS in the preſent Parliament: and to the truly religious and ever honoured Mr JOHN LOVERING, of the city of London, merchant.

*Much honoured and eſteemed,*

ALTHOUGH dedications are too often abuſed to a vain flattery, yet there is an excellent uſe and advantage to be made of them: partly to encourage perſons of worth and eminency to eſpouſe the intereſt of religion themſelves; and partly to oblige thoſe readers, for whom ſuch books are principally intended, to a diligent peruſal of them, by intereſting ſuch perſons in them, for whom they have great reſpects, or on whom they have any dependence.

Upon the firſt account, a dedication would be needleſs to you: for I am perſuaded, you do not only in your judgment approve the deſign I here manage, *viz.* The reformation of the profane and looſer ſort of our ſeamen; but are alſo heartily willing to improve your intereſt to the uttermoſt for the promotion of it. I cannot look upon you as perſons acted by that low and common ſpirit that the moſt of your profeſſion are acted by, who little regard, if they be good ſervants to them, whether God have any ſervice from them or not; and if they pay them the wages due for their work, never think of the wages they are to receive for their ſin. You are judged to be perſons of another ſpirit, who do not only mind, but advance Chriſt's intereſt above your own, and negotiate for his glory, as well as for your own gain: and yet herein you conſult your own intereſt as well as God's: *Subordinata non pugnant.* Your intereſt is never more proſperouſly managed, or abundantly ſecured, than when it is carried on in a due ſubordination to God's. Their reformation will apparently tend to your advantage. Thoſe ſins of theirs, againſt which I have here engaged, are the Jonahs in your ſhips; it is ſin that ſinks them, and drives them againſt the rocks. "One "ſinner deſtroyeth much good," Eccl. viii. 11. How much more a lewd crew of them conſpiring to provoke God! the death of their luſts, is the more probable means to give life to your trade. And as theſe counſels proſper in their hearts, ſo will your buſineſs thrive in your hands. Piety and proſperity are married together in that promiſe, Pſal. i. 3. Oneſimus was never ſo profitable a ſervant to Philemon, as when he became his brother in a *ſpiritual*, as well as his ſervant in a *civil* capacity, Phil. ver. 11. and 16. compared. And yet if your intereſt were forced to ſtep back, to give way to Chriſt's, I hope you would (notwithſtanding) rejoice therein. So that my preſent buſineſs is, not ſo much to perſuade you, whoſe hearts I hope, God hath already perſuaded to ſo good a work; as to make your fame and reſpects, which are great among them, an innocent bait to tempt them to their duty. And if either your names or intereſt may be uſeful to ſuch an end, I preſume I may uſe them freely, and welcome; for, ſure I am, they can never be put to a better uſe.

Well then, I will make bold to ſend this ſmall adventure in your ſhips; and if the return of it be but the converſion of one ſoul to God, I ſhall reckon that I have made a better voyage than you, let your returns be never ſo rich.

How theſe things will affect them I know not. I do ſuppoſe it will produce different effects upon them, according to the different tempers of their ſpirits, and according as God ſhall command or ſuſpend the bleſſing. Poſſibly ſome will ſtorm at the cloſe and cutting rebukes of the word, (for moſt men's luſts are a great deal more ſenſible and tender than their conſciences) and will fondly imagine that this neceſſary plainneſs tends to their reproach. But if none but the guilty can be ſuppoſed to be angry at them, they will thereby reproach

themſelves a great deal more than ever I intended to do.

I confeſs it is a bitter pill, and compounded of many operative and ſtrong ingredients, which do acute it; but not a jot more than is neceſſary. I ſhall beg the aſſiſtance of your prayers to God for them, and of your grave admonitions and exhortations to them for God; which will much help its operation, and facilitate my deſign, to do their ſouls a piece of everlaſting ſervice; with which deſign I can truly ſay, I even travail in pain for them. Your aſſiſtance therefore in this good work, will put the higheſt obligation upon

*Your moſt affectionate*

*Friend and Servant,*

*to be commanded,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

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A

## *SOBER CONSIDERATION*

Of the Sin of

# DRUNKENNESS.

IN the former treatiſe I have endeavoured to ſpiritualize earthly objects, and elevate your thoughts to more ſublime and excellent contemplations; that earthly things may rather be a ſtep, than a ſtop to heavenly. You have therein my beſt advice to guide you in your courſe to that port of your eternal reſt and happineſs.

In this I have given warning of ſome dangerous rocks and quick-ſands that lie upon your left hand; upon which millions of ſouls have periſhed, and others are wilfully running to their own perdition. Such are the horrid ſins of *drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, profane ſwearing, violation of promiſes, engagements made to God, and atheiſtical ſlighting and contempt of death and eternity.* All which I have here given warning of, and held forth a light to diſcover where your danger is. If after this you obſtinately proſecute your luſts, and will not be reclaimed; you periſh without apology, I have freed mine own ſoul.

Let none interpret this neceſſary plainneſs as a reproach to ſeamen, as if I repreſented them to the world worſe than they are. If, upon that account, any of them be offended, methinks theſe three or four conſiderations ſhould remove that offence.

*Firſt,* That if this cloſe and plain dealing be neceſſary, in order to your cure, and you will be offended thereat, it is better you ſhould be offended than God. Miniſters are often put upon lamentable ſtraits, they ſail betwixt Scylla and Charybdis; the wrath of God

upon one ſide, if we do not ſpeak plain and home, as the neceſſity of the caſe requires; and man's wrath if we do: what ſhall we do in this ſtrait? Either God or you, it ſeems, muſt be offended; and if it cannot be avoided, I ſhall rather hazard your anger than God's, and think it far more tolerable.

*Secondly*, If you did but ſee the neceſſity and end of this manner of dealing with your ſouls, you would not be offended. But put it into a more ſenſible caſe, and you will ſee and acknowledge it preſently. If I ſhould ſee an high-built wall giving way, and ready to fall upon you, would you be angry with me, if by plucking you out of the danger, I ſhould pluck your arm out of joint; certainly you would not. Why, this is the caſe here: See Iſa. xxx. 13. "Therefore this "iniquity ſhall be to you as a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out in a "high wall, whoſe breaking cometh ſuddenly, at an inſtant."

*Thirdly*, What a madneſs is it to abide in a condition over which all woes and curſes hang, and yet not be able to endure to hear of it! Why, what will it profit you to have your miſery hid from your eyes, and kept from you ears a little while? You muſt ſee this wrath, and hear louder vollies of woes from your own conſciences, if you remain in this condition. You cannot bear that from us, which your conſcience will one of theſe days preach themſelves to you, and that in a more dreadful dialect than I have uſed here.

*Fourthly*, I do not charge theſe ſins indifferently upon all ſeamen. No, I know there are ſome choice and good men amongſt your men, that fear an oath, and hate even the garments ſpotted with the fleſh, who are (I queſtion not) the credit and glory of our Engliſh nation, in the eyes of ſtrangers that converſe with them. Nor yet do I think that all that are wicked amongſt them are equally guilty of all theſe evils; for though all that are graceleſs be equally under the dominion of original corruption, yet it follows not from thence, that therefore actual ſins muſt reign alike in them: there is a great difference, even among ungodly men themſelves in this reſpect; which difference ariſeth from their various cuſtoms, conſtitutions, abilities, educations, and the different adminiſtrations of the Spirit, in enlightening, convincing, and putting checks upon conſcience: for tho' God be not the author, yet he is the orderer of ſin. And this makes a great diſparity, even among wicked men themſelves. Some are perſons of good morals, though not gracious principles, which produce a civil and ſober, though not a holy and religious life. And others, though they live in ſome one of theſe luſts, yet are not guilty of ſome others of them. For it is with original corruption, juſt as it is with the ſap of the earth, which though it be the matter of all kind of fruits, yet in ſome ground it ſorts better with one grain than with another: and ſo in plants, in one tree it becomes an apple, in another a cherry; even ſo it is with this original corruption, in one man it runs moſt into ſwearing, in another into uncleanneſs, in a third into drunkenneſs. Luſt is nothing elſe but the corrupt appetite of the creature

to ſome ſinful object; and therefore look as it is with the appetite with reſpect to food, ſo it is with the vitiated appetites of ſouls to ſin. One man loves this food beſt, and another that; there is endleſs variety in that, and ſo in this.

Having ſpoken thus much to remove offence, I ſhall now beg you to peruſe the following diſcourſe. Conſider what evidence theſe things carry with them. Search the alledged ſcriptures, ſee if they be truly recited and applied to the caſe in hand: And if ſo, O tremble at the truth you read! bring forth your luſts, that they may die the death. Will you not part with theſe abominable practices till death and hell make the ſeparation? Ah! how much better is it for you that grace ſhould do it? And becauſe many of you ſee not the danger, and therefore prize not the remedy, I do here requeſt all thoſe that have the bowels of pity in them, for their poor relations, who are ſinking, drowning, periſhing, to ſpread theſe following cautions before the Lord for a bleſſing, and then put them into their hands. And O that all pious maſters would perſuade all thoſe that are under their charge to buy this enſuing treatiſe, and diligently peruſe it. And the firſt caution I ſhall give them is this:

CAUTION I.

TAKE heed, and beware of the deteſtable ſin of drunkenneſs, which is a beaſtly ſin, a voluntary madneſs, a ſin that unmans thee, and makes thee like the beaſts that periſh; yea, ſets thee below the beaſts, which will not drink to exceſs; or, if they do, yet it is not their ſin. *One of the ancients calls it, 'A diſtemper of 'the head, a ſubverſion of the ſenſes, a tempeſt in the tongue, a ſtorm 'of the body, the ſhipwreck of virtue, the loſs of time, a wilful 'madneſs, a pleaſant devil, a ſugared poiſon, a ſweet ſin, which he 'that has, has not himſelf, and he that commits it, doth not only 'commit ſin, but he himſelf is altogether ſin.' It is a ſin at which the moſt ſober heathens bluſhed. The Spartans brought their children to loath it, by ſhewing them a drunkard, whom they gazed at as a monſter: Even Epicurus himſelf, who eſteemed happineſs to conſiſt in pleaſure, yet was temperate, as Cicero obſerves. Among the heathens he was accounted the beſt man, that ſpent more oil in the lamp, than wine in the bottle. Chriſtianity could once glory in its profeſſors: Tertullian ſaith of the primitive Chriſtians, they ſat not down before they prayed; they eat no more than might ſuffice hunger, they drank no more than was ſufficient for temperate men; they did ſo eat and drink, as thoſe that remembered they muſt pray afterward. But now we may bluſh to behold ſuch beaſtly ſenſualiſts adorning themſelves with its name, and ſheltering themſelves under its wings.

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* *Turbatio capitis, ſubverſio ſenſus, tempeſtas linguæ, procella corporis, naufragium virtutis, amiſſio temporis, inſania voluntaria, blandus dæmon, dulce venenum, ſuave peccatum, quam qui habet, ſeipſum non habet; quam qui fecit, peccatum non fecit, ſed ipſe totus eſt peccatum.* Aug. ad. lacr. Virginis.

And amongſt thoſe that profeſs Chriſtianity, how ordinarily is this ſin committed by ſeamen? This inſatiable dropſy is a diſeaſe that reigns, eſpecially among the inferior and ruder ſort of them. Some of them have gone aboard drunk, and laid the foundation of their voyage in ſin. O what a preparation is this! They know not whether ever they ſhall ſee the land of their nativity any more: the next ſtorm may ſend them into eternity: Yet this is the farewel they take, this is their preparation to meet the Lord. And ſo in their returns, notwithſtanding the terrible and aſtoniſhing works of the Lord, which they have beheld with their eyes, and their marvellous preſervation in ſo great and terrible extremities; yet thus do they requite the Lord, as ſoon as their dangers are over, as if they had been delivered to commit all theſe abominations. But a few hours or days ſince, they were reeling to and fro upon a ſtormy ocean, and ſtaggering like drunken men, as it is ſaid, Pſal. cvii. 27. and now you may ſee them reeling and ſtaggering in the ſtreets, drowning the ſenſe of all thoſe precious mercies and deliverances in their drunken cups.

Reader, if thou be one that is guilty of this ſin, for the Lord's ſake bethink thyſelf ſpeedily, and weigh, with the reaſon of a man, what I ſhall now ſay, in order to thy conviction, humiliation, and reformation. I need not ſpend many words, to open the nature of this ſin to you; we all grant, that there is a lawful uſe of wine and ſtrong drink to ſupport nature, not to clog it; to cure infirmities, not to cauſe them. "Drink no longer water, but uſe a little wine, "for thy ſtomach's ſake, and thine often infirmity," ſaith Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 23. Mark, drink not water, but wine; *Sed modice*, (i. e.) *medice; pro remedio, non pro deliciis*, ſaith Ambroſe*; that is, uſe it modeſtly, viz. medicinally, not for pleaſure, but for remedy. Yea, God allows it, not only for bare neceſſity, but for cheerfulneſs and alacrity, that the body may be more fit and more expedite for duty, Prov. xxxi. 7. but further no man proceeds, without the violation of ſobriety. When men ſit till wine have inflamed them, and reaſon be diſturbed, (for drunkenneſs is the privation of reaſon, cauſed by immoderate drinking), then do they come under the guilt of this horrid and abominable ſin. To the ſatisfaction and refreſhment of nature, you may drink: for it is a part of the curſe to drink, and not be ſatisfied; but take heed and go no further; "For "wine is a [mocker], ſtrong drink is raging, and whoſoever is "deceived thereby, is not wiſe," Prov. xx. 1. The throat is a ſlippery place; how eaſily may a ſin ſlip through it into the ſoul? Theſe ſenſual pleaſures have a kind of inchanting power upon the ſoul, and by cuſtom gain upon it, till they have inſlaved it, and brought it under their power. Now, this is the ſin againſt which God hath delivered ſo many precepts, and denounced ſo many woes, in his

* *Qui dedit aquam, dedit vinum.*

word. Eph. v. 18 " Be not drunken with wine, wherein is exceſs." Rom. xiii. 13. " Not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering " and wantonneſs," Iſa. v. 11. " Woe to them that riſe up early in " the morning, that they may follow ſtrong drink, that continue " until night, till wine inflame them:" with many other of dreadful importance. Now, to ſtartle thee for ever from this abominable and filthy luſt, I ſhall here propoune to thy conſideration theſe ten enſuing arguments; and oh that they might ſtand in the way, as the angel did in Balaam's, when thou art in the proſecution of thy ſenſual pleaſures! And the firſt is this:

*Argument* 1. It ſhould exceedingly diſſuade from this ſin, to conſider that it is an high abuſe of the bounty and goodneſs of God in affording us thoſe ſweet refreſhments, to make our lives comfortable to us upon earth. In Adam we forfeited all right to all earthly, as well as heavenly mercies: God might have taken thee from the womb, when thou waſt a ſinner but of a ſpan long, and immediately have ſent thee to thine own place; thou hadſt no right to a drop of water more than what the bounty of God gave thee: And whereas he might have thruſt thee out of the world as ſoon as thou cameſt into it, and ſo all thoſe days of mercy thou haſt had on earth might have been ſpent in howling and unſpeakable miſery in hell: Behold the bounty and goodneſs of God to thee; I ſay, behold it, and wonder: He hath ſuffered thee for ſo many years to live upon the earth, which he hath prepared and furniſhed with all things fit for thy neceſſity and delight: Out of the earth, on which thou treadeſt, " he " bringeth forth thy food, and [wine] to make glad thy heart," Pſal. civ. 14, 15. And doſt thou thus requite the Lord? Hath mercy armed an enemy to fight againſt it with its own weapons? Ah! that ever the riches of his goodneſs, bounty, and long-ſuffering, all which are arguments to lead thee to repentance, ſhould be thus abuſed! If God had not been ſo bountiful, thou couldſt not have been ſo ſinful.

*Arg.* 2. It degrades a man from the honour of his creation, and equalizeth him to the beaſt that periſheth: Wine is ſaid to take away the heart, Hoſ. iv. 11. i. e. the wiſdom and ingenuity of a man, and ſo brutifies him, as Nebuchadnezzar, who loſt the heart of a man, and had the heart of a beaſt given him, Dan. iv. 32. The heart of a man hath its generoſity and ſprightlineſs, brave, vigorous ſpirits in it, capable of, and fitted for noble and worthy actions and employments; but his luſt effeminates, quenches, and drowns that maſculine vigour in the puddle of exceſs and ſenſuality: For no ſooner is a man brought under the dominion of this luſt, but the government of reaſon is renounced, which ſhould exerciſe a coercive power over the affections, and all is delivered up into the hands of luſt and appetite: and ſo they act not by diſcretion and reaſon, but by luſt and will, as the beaſts do by inſtinct. The ſpirit of man entertains itſelf with intellectual and chaſte delights; the ſoul of a beaſt is only fit-

ted for ſuch low, ſenſitive, and dreggy pleaſures. Thou haſt ſomething of the *angel*, and ſomething of the *beaſt* in thee; thy ſoul partakes of the nature of angels, thy body of the nature of beaſts, Oh! how many pamper the *beaſt* while they ſtarve the *angel?* God, in the firſt chapter, put all the creatures in ſubjection to thee; by this luſt thou putteſt thyſelf in ſubjection to the creature, and art brought under its power, 1 Cor. vi. 12. If God had given thee the head or feet of a beaſt, oh! what a miſery wouldſt thou have eſteemed it? and is it nothing to have the heart of a beaſt? Oh! conſider it ſadly.

*Arg.* 3. It is a ſin by which thou greatly wrongeſt and abuſeſt thine own body. The body is the ſoul's inſtrument; it is as the tools are to a ſkilful artificer; this luſt both dulls and ſpoils it, ſo that it is utterly unfit for any ſervice of him that made it. Thy body is a curious piece, not made by a word of command, as other creatures, but by a word of counſel; "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and "curiouſly wrought," ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxxxix. 14. or as the vulgar, *Acupictus ſum*, Painted as with needle-work of divers colours, like a garment richly embroidered. Look how many members, ſo many wonders! There are miracles enough, ſaith one, betwixt head and foot to fill a volume. There is, ſaith another, ſuch curious workmanſhip in the eye, that upon the firſt ſight of it, ſome Atheiſts have been forced to acknowledge a God; eſpecially that fifth muſcle in the eye is wonderful, whereby, (as a learned * author obſerves) man differeth from all other creatures, who have but four; one to turn the eye downward, a ſecond to hold it forward, a third to move it to the right-hand, a fourth to the left; but none to turn it upward as a man hath. Now, judge in thyſelf; Did God frame ſuch a curious piece, and enliven it with a ſoul, which is a ſpark, a ray of his own light, whoſe motions are ſo quick, various, and indefatigable, whoſe flights of reaſon are ſo tranſcendent; did God, thinkeſt thou, ſend down this curious peace, the top and glory of the creation, the *index* and *epitome* of the whole world, Eccl. xii. 2. did God, I ſay, ſend down this picture of his own perfection, to be but as a ſtrainer for meats and drinks, a ſponge to ſuck in wine and beer? Or canſt thou anſwer for the abuſe and deſtruction of it? By this exceſs thou filleſt it with innumerable diſeaſes, under which it languiſheth; and at laſt thy life, like a lamp, is extinguiſhed, being drowned with too much oil. † 'Infinite diſeaſes are begotten by it, (ſaith Zanchius); hence come apo'plexies, gouts, palſies, ſudden death, trembling of the hands and 'legs;' herein they bring Cain's curſe upon themſelves, ſaith Ambroſe: Drunkenneſs ſlays more than the ſword. Oh! what a terrible thing will it be to conſider upon a death-bed, that theſe pangs

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* *Columb. de re Anat.*

† *Infinitæ morborum genera inde naſcuntur apoplexæ, paralyſes, arthrides*, &c. *Ille optimus medicus ſibi, qui modicus cibi.* Aug.

and aches are the fruits of thy intemperance and exceſs! "Who hath "woe? Who hath ſorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath "babbling? Who hath wounds without cauſe? Who hath redneſs "of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to ſeek "mixed wine," Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. By this *enumeration* and manner of *interrogation*, he ſeems to make it a difficult thing to recount the miſeries that drunkenneſs loads the outward man with; for look as vermin abound where there is ſtore of corn, ſo do diſeaſes in the bodies of drunkards, where crudities do ſo abound. Now, methinks, if thou haſt no regard to thy pour ſoul, or the glory of God, yet ſuch a ſenſible argument as this, from thy body, ſhould move thee.

*Arg.* 4. Drunkenneſs waſtes and ſcatters thine eſtate, poverty attends exceſs; the drunkard ſhall be clothed with rags, and brought to a morſel of bread. Solomon hath read thy fortune, Prov. xxi. 17. "He that loveth wine and oil ſhall not be rich;" luxury and beggary are ſeldom far aſunder. When Diogenes heard a drunkard's houſe cried to be ſold; 'I thought (quoth he) it would not be long 'e'er he vomited up his houſe alſo.' The Hebrew word יורש and the Greek word ασωτια, which ſignify luxury; the former is compounded of two words, which ſignify, *Thou ſhalt be poor;* and the latter ſignifies the loſing of the poſſeſſion of that good which is in our hand. "The drunkard and the glutton ſhall ſurely come to "poverty," Prov. xxiii. 21. In the Hebrew it is, he ſhall be diſinherited or diſpoſſeſſed. It doth not only diſpoſſeſs a man of his reaſon, which is a rich and fair inheritance given to him by God, but it alſo diſpoſſeſſes him of his eſtate: It waſtes all that either the provident care of thy progenitors, or the bleſſing of God upon thine own induſtry, hath obtained for thee. And how will this ſting like an adder, when thou ſhalt conſider it? Apicus the Roman, hearing that there were ſeven hundred crowns only remaining of a fair eſtate that his father had left him, fell into a deep melancholy, and, fearing want, hanged himſelf, ſaith Seneca. And not to mention the miſeries and ſorrows they bring hereby upon their families, drinking the tears, yea, the blood of their wives and children: Oh! what an account will they give to God, when the reckoning day comes! Believe it, ſirs, there is not a ſhilling of your eſtates, but God will reckon with you for the expence thereof. If you have ſpent it upon your luſts, whilſt the neceſſity of your families, or the poor, called upon you for it; I ſhould be loth to have your account to make, for a thouſand times more than ever you poſſeſſed. O woful expence, that is followed with ſuch dreadful reckonings!

*Arg.* 5. Conſider what vile and ignominious characters the Spirit of God hath put upon the ſubjects of this ſin. The ſcripture every where notes them for infamous, and moſt abominable perſons. When Eli ſuppoſed Hannah to be drunken, "Count not thine hand-"maid a daughter of Belial," ſaid ſhe, 1 Sam. i. 16. Now, a ſon or daughter of Belial is, in ſcripture-language, the vileſt of men

or women. So Pſal. lxix. 12. "They that ſit in the gate, ſpeak "againſt me, and I am the ſong of drunkards," i. e. of the baſeſt and vileſt of men, as the oppoſition plainly ſhews; for they are oppoſed to them that ſit in the gate, that is, honourable perſons. The Lord would have his people ſhun the ſociety of ſuch as a peſt, not to eat with them, 1 Cor. v. 11. Yea, the ſcripture brands them with atheiſm; they are ſuch as have loſt the ſenſe and expectation of the day of judgment; mind not another world, nor do they look for the coming of the Lord, Mat. xxiv. 27, 28. He ſaith the Lord delayeth his coming, and then falls a drinking with the drunkard. The thoughts of that day will make them leave their cups, or their cups will drown the thoughts of ſuch a day. And will not all the contempt, ſhame and infamy which the Spirit of God hath poured on the head of this ſin cauſe thee to abhor it? Do not all godly, yea, moral perſons, abhor the drunkard? Oh! methinks the ſhame that attends it, ſhould be as a fence to keep thee from it.

*Arg* 6. Sadly conſider, there can be nothing of the ſanctifying Spirit in a ſoul that is under the dominion of this luſt; for upon the firſt diſcovery of the grace of God, the ſoul renounces the government of ſenſuality: "The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, "teacheth men to live ſoberly," Tit. ii. 11, 12. That is one of its firſt effects. Drunkenneſs indeed may be found among heathens, that are loſt in the darkneſs of ignorance; but it may not be once named among the children of the day. "They that be drunken, "are drunken in the night; but let us that are of the day, be ſober," 1 Theſſ. v. 7, 8. And the apoſtles often oppoſe wine and the Spirit as things incompatible, Eph. v. 18. "Be not drunk with wine, "wherein is exceſs; but be filled with the Spirit." So Jude 19. "Senſual, not having the Spirit," Now what a dreadful conſideration is this? "If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none "of his," Rom. viii. 9. Senſual perſons have not the Spirit of Chriſt, and ſo can be none of his. It is true, Noah, a godly man, once fell into this ſin; but, as Theodoret ſaith, and that truly, it proceeded *ab inexperientia, non ab intemperantia*, from want of experience of the force and power of the grape, not from intemperance; and, beſides, we find not that ever he was again overtaken with that ſin; but thou knoweſt it, and yet perſiſteſt, O wretched creature! the Spirit of Chriſt cannot dwell in thee. The Lord help thee to lay it to heart ſadly!

*Arg.* 7. It is a ſin over which many direful woes and threats hang in the word, like ſo many low'ring clouds, ready to pour down vengeance upon the heads of ſuch ſinners. Look, as the condition of the ſaints is compaſſed round with promiſes, ſo is yours with threatenings, Iſa. v. 11. "Woe to them that riſe up early in the morning, "that they may follow ſtrong drink, and continue until night, un"til wine inflame them." So Iſa. xxviii. 1, 2. "Woe to the crown "of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim," &c. with many others,

too long to be enumerated here. Now, conſider what a fearful thing it is to be under theſe woes of God! Sinner, I beſeech thee, do not make light of them, for they will fall heavy; aſſure thyſelf not one of them ſhall fall to the ground; they will all take place upon thee, except thou repent.

There are woes of men, and woes of God: God's woes are true woes, and make their condition woful, to purpoſe, on whom they fall. Other woes, as one ſaith, do but touch the ſkin, but theſe ſtrike the ſoul; other woes are but temporal, theſe are eternal; others do only part betwixt us and our outward comforts, theſe betwixt God and us for ever.

*Arg.* 8. Drunkenneſs is a leading ſin, which has a great retinue and attendance of other ſins waiting on it; it is like a ſudden land-flood, which brings a great deal of dirt with it. So that look as faith excels among the graces, becauſe it enlivens, actuates, and gives ſtrength to them, ſo is this among ſins. It is not ſo much a ſpecial ſin againſt a ſingle precept of God, as a general violation of the whole law, ſaith accurate Ameſius. It doth not only call off the guard, but warms and quickens all other luſts, and ſo expoſes the ſoul to be proſtituted by them. (1.) It gives occaſion, yea, is the real cauſe of many contentions, and fatal quarrels, Prov. xxiii. 29. "Who hath "woe? Who hath ſorrow? Who hath [contentions], babbling, "wounds without cauſe? They that tarry long at the wine," *&c.* Contentions and wounds are the ordinary effects of drunken meetings: When reaſon is depoſed, and luſt heated, what will not men attempt? (2.) Scoffs and reproaches of the ways and people of God, Pſal. lxix. 12. "David was the ſong of the drunkards." (3.) It is the great incendiary of luſt: You ſhall find rioting and drunkenneſs joined with chambering and wantonneſs, Rom. xiii. 13. *Nunquam ego ebrium caſtum putabo*, ſaith Hierom; I will never think a drunkard to be chaſte. Solomon plainly tells us what the iſſue will be, Prov. xxiii. 33. "Thine eyes ſhall behold a ſtrange woman, and thy heart "ſhall utter perverſe things," ſpeaking of the drunkard. It may be called *Gad*, for a troop followeth it. Hence one aptly calls it, *The devil's bridle*, by which he turneth the ſinner which way he pleaſes; he that is overcome by it, can overcome no other ſin.

*Arg.* 9. But if none of the former conſiderations can prevail, I hope theſe two laſt may, unleſs all ſenſe and tenderneſs be loſt. Conſider, therefore, in the 9th place, that drunkards are in ſcripture marked out for hell; the characters of death are upon them. You ſhall find them pinioned with other ſons of death, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. "Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom "of God? Be not deceived: Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor "adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, "nor thieves, nor covetous, nor [drunkards], nor revilers, nor ex-"tortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God." Oh dreadful thunder-bolt! He is not *aſleep* but *dead*, that is not ſtartled at it.

Lord, how are guilty ſinners able to face ſuch a text as this is! Oh ſoul! dareſt thou for a ſuperfluous cup, adventure to drink a cup of pure unmixed wrath? O think when the wine ſparkles in the glaſs, and gives its colour, think, I ſay, what a cup of trembling is in the hand of the Lord for thee. Thou wilt not now believe this. Oh! but the day is coming, when thou ſhalt know the price of theſe brutiſh pleaſures. Oh! it will then ſting like an adder. Ah! this ſhort-lived beaſtly pleaſure is the price for which thou ſelleſt heaven, and rivers of pleaſure that are at God's right hand.

Obj. *But I hope I ſhall repent, and then this text can be no bar to my ſalvation.*

*Sol.* True; if God ſhall give thee repentance, it could not. But, in the laſt place, to awaken thee thoroughly, and ſtartle thy ſecure conſcience, which ſenſuality hath brawned and cauterized, let me tell thee,

*Arg.* 10. That it is a ſin out of whoſe power few, or none are ever reſcued and reclaimed. On this account it was that St Auguſtine called it the *pit of hell.* He that is addicted to this ſin becomes incurable, ſaith a * reverend divine; for ſeldom or never have I known a drunkard reclaimed. And its power to hold the ſoul in ſubjection to it, lies in two things eſpecially: (1.) As it becomes habitual; and habits are not eaſily broken. Be pleaſed to view an example in the caſe, Prov. xxiii. 35. "They have ſtricken me, ſhalt thou ſay, and I was "not ſick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When ſhall I "awake? I will ſeek it yet again." (2.) As it "takes away the "heart," Hoſ. iv. 11. that is, the underſtanding, reaſon, and ingenuity of a man, and ſo makes him incapable of being reclaimed by counſel. Upon this account it was that Abigail would not ſpeak leſs or more to Nabal, until the wine was gone out of him, 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37. Plainly intimating, that no wholeſome counſel can get in until the wine be gone out. When one aſked Cleoſtratus, whether he were not aſhamed to be drunken, he tartly replied, 'And are not 'you aſhamed to admoniſh a drunkard?' Intimating that no wiſe man would caſt away an admonition upon ſuch an one. And it not only renders them incapable of counſel for the time, but by degrees it beſots and infatuates them; which is a very grievous ſtroke from God upon them, making way to their eternal ruin. So then you ſee upon the whole what a dangerous gulph the ſin of drunkenneſs is. I beg you, for the Lord's ſake, and by all the regard you have to your ſouls, bodies, and eſtates, beware of it. O conſider theſe ten arguments I have here produced againſt it. I ſhould have proceeded to anſwer the ſeveral pleas and excuſes you have for it; but I mind brevity, and ſhall ſhut up this firſt caution with a very pertinent and ingenious poem of Mr George Herbert, in his TEMPLE.

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* Ameſ. de Conſc. *p.* 139.

Drink not the third glaſs, which thou canſt not tame
When once it is within thee; but before
May'ſt rule it as thou liſt: and pour the ſhame
Which it will pour to thee upon the floor.
It is moſt juſt to throw that on the ground,
Which would throw me there, if I kept the round.

He that is drunken, may his mother kill,
Lie with his ſiſter: he hath loſt the reins;
Is outlaw'd by himſelf; all kind of ill
Did with the liquor ſlide into the veins.
The drunkard forfeits man, and doth diveſt
All worldly right, ſave what he has by beaſt.

Shall I, to pleaſe another's wine-ſprung mind,
Loſe all my own? God has given me a meaſure
Short of his Can, and body; muſt I find
A pain in that wherein he finds a pleaſure?
Stay at the third glaſs; if thou loſe thy hold,
Then thou art modeſt, but the wine grows bold.

If reaſon move not gallants, quit the room,
(All in a ſhipwreck ſhift their ſev'ral way.)
Let not a common ruin thee intomb:
Be not a beaſt in courteſies; but ſtay,
Stay at the third glaſs, or forego the place:
Wine, above all things, doth God's ſtamp deface.

### CAUTION II.

THE ſecond evil I ſhall deal with is the evil of the tongue, which, as St James ſaith, is full of deadly poiſon, oaths, curſes, blaſphemies; and this poiſon it ſcatters up and down the world in all places; an untamed member that none can rule, Jam. iii. 7, 8. The fierceſt of beaſts have been tamed by man, as the apoſtle there obſerves, which is a relic of his old ſuperiority and dominion over them: but this is an unruly member that none can tame but he that made it; no beaſt ſo fierce and crabbed as this is. It may be, I may be bitten by it for my labour and endeavours to put a reſtraint upon it: but I ſhall adventure it. My deſign is not to diſhonour, or exaſperate you; but if my faithfulneſs to God and you ſhould accidentally do ſo, I cannot help that.

Friends, Providence oftentimes confines many of you together within the narrow limits of a ſhip, where you have time enough, and if your hearts were ſanctified, many choice advantages of edifying one another. O what tranſcendent ſubjects doth Providence daily preſent you with, to take up your diſcourſes! How many experiences of extraordinary mercies and preſervations have you to relate to one another, and bleſs the Lord for! Alſo, how many works of won-

der do you daily behold, who go down into the deeps? O what heavenly employment is here for your tongues! how ſhould they be talking of all his wonders? How ſhould you call upon each other, as David did, Pſal. lxvi. 16. "Come hither, and I will tell you what "God hath done for my ſoul," at ſuch a time, in ſuch an extremity? How ſhould you call upon one another to pay "the vows your lips "have uttered in your diſtreſs?" Thus ſhould one provoke another in this angelical work, as one lively bird ſets the whole flock a chirping.

But tell me, Sirs, ſhould a man come aboard you at ſea, and aſk of you as Chriſt did of thoſe two diſciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 17. "What manner of communication is this that ye have by the "way?" O what a ſad account would he have from moſt of you! It may be he ſhould find one *jeſting*, and another *ſwearing*, a third *reviling* godlineſs, and the profeſſors of it; ſo that it would be a little hell for a ſerious Chriſtian to be confined to your ſociety. This is not, I am confident, the manner of all. We have a company of more ſober ſeamen, and bleſſed be God for them; but ſurely thus ſtands the caſe with moſt of you. O what ſtuff is here from perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity, and bordering cloſe upon the confines of eternity as you do?

It is not my purpoſe to write of all the diſeaſes of the tongue; that would fill a volume, and is inconſiſtent with my intended brevity. Who can recount the evils of the tongue? The apoſtle ſaith, "It is "a world of iniquity," Jam. iii. 6. And if there be a world of ſin in one member, who can number the ſins of all the members? Laurentius reckons as many ſins of the tongue as there are letters in the alphabet. And it is an obſervable note that one hath upon Rom. iii. 13, 14. That when Paul anatomizeth the natural man there, he inſiſteth longer upon the organs of ſpeech, than all the other members: "Their throat is an open ſepulchre, with their tongues they have "uſed deceit; the poiſon of aſps is under their lips, their mouth is "full of curſing and bitterneſs."

But, to be ſhort, we find the Spirit of God in ſcripture comparing the tongue to a tree, Prov. xv. 4. "A wholeſome tongue is a tree of "life." And words are the fruit of the tree, Iſa. lvii. 12. "I create "the fruit of the lips." Some of theſe trees bear precious fruits, and it is a lovely ſight to behold them laden with them in their ſeaſons, Prov. xxv. 11. "A word fitly ſpoken, is like apples of gold in "pictures of ſilver." Such a tongue is a tree of life. Others of theſe trees bear evil fruit, grapes of Sodom, and cluſters of Gomorrha. I ſhall only inſiſt upon two ſorts of theſe fruits, viz. (1.) Withered, ſapleſs fruit; I mean, idle and unprofitable words. (2.) Rotten and corrupt fruit; I mean, profane oaths, and profanations of the ſacred name of God. No fruit in the world ſo apt to corrupt and taint as the fruit of the lips. When it is ſo, the ſcripture calls it σαπρος λογος, corrupt or rotten communication, Eph. iv. 29. To prevent this the

Spirit of God preſcribes an excellent way to ſeaſon our words, and keep them ſweet and ſound, that they may neither wither nor become idle and ſapleſs, or putrify and become rotten, as profane words are, Col. iv. 6. "Let your ſpeech be always with grace, ſeaſoned with "ſalt, that you may know how to anſwer every man." Oh! if the ſalt of grace were once caſt into the fountain, the heart-ſtreams muſt needs become more ſavoury and pleaſant, as the waters of Marah when they were healed. My preſent work is to attempt the cure of this double evil of *idle words*, and *profane oaths*, whereof thouſands among you are deeply guilty. I ſhall begin with the firſt, viz.

I. IDLE WORDS. That is, uſeleſs chat, unprofitable talk, that is not referred any way to the glory of God. This is a common evil, and little regarded by moſt men; but yet a ſin of ſeverer aggravations than the moſt imagine: light words weigh heavy in God's balance.

*Arg.* 1. For, firſt, The evil of them is exceedingly aggravated by this: they abuſe and pervert the tongue, that noble member, from that employment and uſe which God by the law of creation deſigned it to. God gave not to man the organs and power of ſpeech (which is his excellency above the beaſts) to ſerve a paſſion or vain humour, to vent the froth and vanity of his ſpirit; but to extol the Creator, and render him the praiſe of all his admirable and glorious works. For though the creation be a curious well-tuned inſtrument, yet man is the muſician that muſt touch it, and make the melody. This was the end of God in forming thoſe inſtruments and organs: but now hereby they are ſubject to Satan and luſt, and employed to the diſhonour of God who made them. God is pleaſed to ſuſpend the power of ſpeech (as we ſee in children) until reaſon begins to bud in them: they have not the liberty of one, until they have the uſe of the other; which plainly ſhews, that God is not willing to have our words run waſte.

*Arg.* 2. It is a ſinful waſting of our precious time; and that puts a further aggravation upon it. Conſider, ſirs, the time of life is but a little ſpot betwixt two eternities. The long-ſuffering God wheels about thoſe glorious celeſtial bodies over your heads, in a conſtant revolution to beget time for you; and the preciouſneſs of every minute thereof reſults from its uſe and end: it is intended and afforded as a ſpace to you to repent in, Rev. ii. 21. And therefore great things depend upon it: no leſs than your eternal happineſs or miſery hangs upon thoſe precious opportunities. Every minute of it hath an influence into eternity. How would the damned value one hour of it if they might enjoy it! The buſineſs you have to do in it is of unſpeakable weight and concernment: this great work, this ſoul-work, and eternity-work, lies upon your hands; you are caſt into ſtraits of time about it: and, if ſo, O what an evil is it in you to waſte it away thus to no purpoſe!

*Arg.* 3. It is a ſin that few are ſenſible of as they are of other ſins, and therefore the more dangerous. It is commonly committed, and that without checks of conſcience. Other ſins, as murder and adultery, though they be horrid ſins, yet are but ſeldom committed, and when they are, conſcience is ſtartled at the horridneſs of them; few, except they be prodigious wretches indeed, dare make light of them. But now for idle and vain words, there are innumerable ſwarms of theſe every day, and few regard them. The intercourſe betwixt the heart and tongue is quick; they are quickly committed, and as eaſily forgotten.

*Arg.* 4. And then, 4thly, They have miſchievous effects upon others. How long doth an idle word, or fooliſh jeſt, ſtick in men's minds, and become an occaſion of much ſin to them? The froth and vanity of thy ſpirit, which thy tongue ſo freely vents among thy vain companions, may be working in their minds when thou art in the duſt, and ſo be tranſmitted from one to another; for unto that no more is requiſite than an *objective exiſtence* of thoſe vain words in their memories. And thus mayeſt thou be ſinning in the perſons of thy companions, when thou art turned into duſt. And this is one reaſon that Suarez gives for a general judgment, after men have paſſed their particular judgment immediately after their death, 'Becauſe '(ſaith he) after this, multitudes of ſins by their means will be com-'mitted in the world, for which they muſt yet be judged to a fuller 'meaſure of wrath.' So that look as many of the precious ſervants of God, now in glory, have left many weighty and holy ſayings behind them, by which many thouſands of ſouls have been benefited, and God glorified on earth, after they had left it: ſo thou leaveſt that vanity upon the minds of others behind thee, by which he may be diſhonoured to many generations. And then,

II. For PROFANE OATHS, the corrupt fruit of a graceleſs heart; oh! how common are theſe among you? Yea, the habit of ſwearing is ſo ſtrengthened in ſome, that they have loſt all ſenſe and conſcience of the ſin. Now, oh! that I might prevail with you to repent of this wickedneſs, and break the force of this cuſtomary evil among you! will you but give me the reading of a few pages more, and weigh with the reaſon of men, what you read? If you will not hearken to counſel, it is a fatal ſign, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. and you ſhall mourn for this obſtinacy hereafter, Prov. v. 12, 13. Deſperate is that evil that ſcorns the remedy. And if you have patience to read it, the Lord give you an heart to conſider what you read, and obey the counſels of God; or elſe it were better thine eyes had never ſeen theſe lines. Well, then, I beſeech you conſider,

*Arg.* 1. That profane oaths are an high abuſe of the dreadful and ſacred name of God, which ſhould neither be ſpoken or thought of without the deepeſt awe and reverence. It is the taking of that ſacred name in vain, Exod. xx. 7. Now God is exceeding tender and jealous over his name; it is dear to him; his name is dreadful and

glorious; Mal. i. 14. "I am a great king, and my name is dreadful "among the Heathen." The heathens would not ordinarily mention the names of ſuch as they reverenced. Suetonius ſaith, that Auguſtus prohibited the common uſe of his name: he thought it an indignity to have his name toſſed up and down in every one's mouth. Yea, ſays Dr Willet on Exod. xx. it was an uſe among them to keep ſecret ſuch names as they would have in reverence. They durſt not mention the name of Demogorgon, whom they held to be the firſt god: they thought when he was named, the earth would tremble. Alſo the name of Mercurius Treſmegiſtus, was very ſparingly uſed, becauſe of that reverence the people had for him. Now conſider, ſhall poor worms be ſo tender of preſerving the reverence of their names! Shall not heathens dare to uſe the names of their idols; and ſhall the ſacred and dreadful name of the true God be thus bandied up and down by tongues of his own creatures? Will not God be avenged for theſe abuſes of his name? Be confident, it ſhall one day be ſanctified upon you in judgment, becauſe ye did not ſanctify it according to your duty.

*Arg.* 2. Swearing is a part of the worſhip of God; and therefore profane ſwearing can be no leſs than the profanation of his worſhip, and robbing him of all the glory he has thereby; Deut. vi. 13. "Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear "by his name." So Jer. iv. 2. "Thou ſhalt ſwear the Lord liv-"eth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs." If a man ſwear by God after this manner, God is exceedingly glorified thereby. Now, that you may ſee what revenue of glory God hath from this part of his worſhip, and how it becomes a part of Divine worſhip, you muſt know then an oath is nothing elſe but the *aſking or deſiring a Divine teſtimony, for the confirmation of the truth of our teſtimony:* Heb. vi. 16. "For men verily ſwear by the greater; and an oath for [confir-"mation] is to them an end of all ſtrife." The corruption of human nature by the fall has made man ſuch a falſe and fickle creature, that his ſingle teſtimony cannot be ſufficient ſecurity for another, eſpecially in weighty caſes, to reſt upon; and therefore in ſwearing, he calleth God for a witneſs of the truth of what he affirms, or promiſeth: I ſay, calleth God to be a witneſs of the truth of what he ſaith, becauſe he is *truth* itſelf, and cannot lie, Heb. vi. 18. Now this calling for, or aſking of a teſtimony from God, makes an oath become a part of God's worſhip, and gives him a great deal of glory and honour; for hereby he that ſweareth acknowledgeth his *omniſciency*, and *infallible truth* and *righteouſneſs*. His *omniſciency* is acknowledged: for by this appeal to him, we imply and acknowledge him to be the *Searcher of the heart and reins;* that he knows the ſecret intents and meaning of our ſpirits. *His ſupreme* and *infallible truth* is alſo acknowledged; for this is manifeſtly carried in an oath, that though I am a falſe and deceitful creature, and my affirmation cannot obtain univerſal and full credence, yet he that is greater than

I, by whoſe name I ſwear, cannot deceive. And, laſtly, his *righteouſneſs* is acknowledged in an oath: for he that ſweareth doth, either *expreſsly* or *implicity*, put himſelf under the curſe and wrath of God, if he ſwear falſely. Every oath hath an execration or imprecation in it, Neh. x. 29. "They entered into a curſe, and an oath, to walk in "God's law." And ſo 2 Cor. i. 23. "I call God for a record "upon my ſoul." And the uſual form in the Old Teſtament was, "The Lord do ſo to me, and more alſo." Now hereby God hath the glory of his righteouſneſs and juſtice given him by the creature, and therefore it is a choice part of the Divine worſhip, or of that homage which a creature oweth to his God. And if this be ſo, then how eaſily may the ſin of raſh and profane oaths be hence argued and aggravated? The more excellent any thing is by an inſtitution of God, by ſo much more horrid and abominable is the abuſe thereof. O how often is the dreadful Majeſty of heaven and earth called to witneſs to frivolous things! and oft to be a witneſs of our rage and fury! as 1 Sam. xiv. 39. Is it a light thing to rob him of his peculiar glory, and ſubject poor ſouls to his curſe and wrath, who has ſaid, "He will be a ſwift witneſs againſt you?" Mal. iii. 5. Your tongues are nimble in committing this ſin, and God will be ſwift in puniſhing it.

*Arg.* 3. It is a ſin which God hath ſeverely threatened to puniſh, and that with temporal and corporal plagues: "For by reaſon of "oaths, the land mourns," Hoſ. iv. 2, 3. That is, it brings the heavy judgment of God upon whole nations, under which they ſhall mourn. And in Zech. v. 2, 3, 4. You have there *a roll of curſes*; i. e. a catalogue of judgments and woes, *the length thereof twenty cubits*; (i. e. ten yards) to ſet out the multitude of woes contained in it: it is a long catalogue, and *a flying roll*, to denote the *ſwiftneſs* of it: it flies towards the houſe of the ſwearer; it makes haſte. The judgments that are written in it linger not, but are even in pain to be delivered. And this flying roll, full of dreadful woes, flies and enters into the houſe of the ſwearer; *and it ſhall therein remain*, ſaith the Lord; it ſhall cleave to his family; none ſhall claw off theſe woes from him: and it ſhall conſume the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof, i. e. bring utter ſubverſion, ruin, and deſolation to his houſe. O dreadful ſin! what a deſolation doth it make! your mouths are full of oaths, and your houſes ſhall be full of curſes. Woe to that wretched family, into which this flying roll ſhall enter! Woe, I ſay, to the wretched inhabitants thereof! "The curſe of "the Lord (ſaith Solomon) is in the houſe of the wicked; but he "bleſſeth the [habitation] of the juſt," Prov. iii 33. *Tuguriolum*, i. e. (ſaith Mercer) *his poor little tenement or cottage*. There is a bleſſing, the promiſes, like clouds of bleſſing, dwell over it, and drop mercies on it; but a curſe in the houſe of the wicked. Ah! how many ſtately manſions are there, in which little other language but oaths and curſes are heard! and theſe are as ſo much gun-powder

laid under the foundation of them, which, when juſtice ſhall ſet fire to, O what work will it make! woe to the inhabitants thereof! Well then, break off this ſin by repentance, unleſs you intend to ruin your families, and bring all the curſes of God into your houſes. If you have no pity for yourſelves, yet pity your poſterity; have mercy for your wives and children; do not ruin all for the indulgence of a luſt.

*Arg.* 4. But that is not all; it brings ſoul-judgments and ſpiritual plagues upon you: it brings hell along with it. And if thou be not afraid to ſin, yet, methinks, thou ſhouldſt be afraid to *burn:* if the love of God can work nothing upon thy brawny heart, yet, methinks, the terrors of the Lord ſhould ſtartle and affright it. To this purpoſe, I beſeech you to weigh theſe ſcriptures; and methinks, unleſs God hath loſt all his authority with you, and hell all its terrors, it ſhould ſtartle you. The firſt is that dreadful ſcripture, James v. 12. "But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not; neither by hea-"ven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let "your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; leſt ye fall into [condem-"nation."] O view this text ſeriouſly! methinks it ſhould be like the fingers that came forth and wrote upon the wall that dreadful ſentence that changed the countenance of a king, and that in the height of a frolic humour, and made his knees ſmite together. Mark, [*above all things*] a form of vehemency and earneſtneſs, like that, Eph. vi. 16. "But above all, taking the ſhield of faith." As faith hath a prelation there before all the graces, ſo ſwearing here before all other vices. [*Swear not,*] i. e. *vainly, raſhly, profanely:* for otherwiſe it is a lawful thing, and a part of God's worſhip, as I have ſhewed: but ſwear not vain oaths, by the creatures, heaven, or earth, &c. which is to advance the creature into the room of God: a ſin to which the Jews were much addicted. But, "let your yea, be yea; "and your nay, nay;" i. e. accuſtom yourſelves to ſhort and plain affirmations and negations, to a ſimple and candid expreſſion of your minds. And the thundering argument that backs it, is this, [*leſt ye fall into condemnation;*] i. e. leſt for theſe things the Judge of heaven and earth paſs a ſentence of condemnation to hell upon you. O ſirs! dare you touch with this hot iron? Dare you from henceforth commit that ſin, that you know will bring you under the condemnation and judgment of God? Do you know what it is for a ſoul to be caſt at God's bar? Did you never ſee a poor malefactor tried at the aſſizes, and obſerve how his face gathers paleneſs, how his legs tremble, and death diſplays its colours in his cheeks, when ſentence is given upon him? But what is that to God's condemnation? What is a gallows to hell? Another text I would recommend to your conſideration is that, Exod. xx. 7. "The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that "taketh his name in vain;" where vain oaths are eſpecially included. Now, what doth God mean, when he ſaith, he will not hold him guiltleſs? The meaning is plain, his ſins ſhall be reckoned and imputed to him; they ſhall lie upon his ſoul; he ſhall be bound

over to anſwer to God for them. O terrible ſentence! what ſoul can bear it, or ſtand before it! "Bleſſed is the man (ſaith David) to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity:" Surely then, curſed is that man to whom God will impute them: and to the ſwearer they ſhall all be imputed, if he break not off his ſin by repentance, and get a Chriſt the ſooner. Oh, how dareſt thou think of going before the Lord with the guilt of all thy ſins upon thee? When Chriſt would adminiſter the very ſpirit of joy into one ſentence to a poor ſinner, Mat. ix. 2. He ſaid, "Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins be "forgiven" And when God would contract the ſum of all miſery into one word, he ſaith, "His ſins ſhall lie down with him in the "duſt," Job xx. 11. Ah, ſoul! one of theſe days thou ſhalt be laid on thy death-bed, or ſee the waves that ſhall entomb thee, leaping and roaring upon every ſide; and then thou wilt ſurely have other thoughts of the happineſs that lies in remiſſion of ſin than thou haſt now. Obſerve the moſt incorrigible ſinner then; hark, how he ſighs and groans, and cries, Ah, Lord! and muſt I die? And then ſee how the tears trickle down his cheeks, and his heart ready to burſt within him. Why, what is the matter? Oh! the Lord will not pardon him, he holds him guilty! If he were ſure his ſins were forgiven, then he could die: but, oh! to appear before the Lord in them, appals him, daunts him, kills the very heart of him! he would fain cry for mercy, but conſcience ſtops his mouth. O, ſaith conſcience, how canſt thou move that tongue to God in prayer for mercy, that hath ſo often rent and torn his glorious name, by oaths and curſes? Sirs, I pray you do not make light of theſe things; they will look wiſhfully upon you one of theſe days, except ye prevent it by ſound converſion.

*Arg.* 5. And then, laſtly, to name no more, I pray you conſider, that a cuſtom of vain words and profane oaths, is as plain an indication and diſcovery of an unregenerate ſoul, as any in the world: this is a ſure ſign thou art none of Chriſt's, nor haſt any thing to do with the promiſes and privileges of his people; for by this the ſcripture diſtinguiſhed the ſtate of ſaints and ſinners, Eccl. ix. 2. "There "is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean "and to the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſa-"crificeth not: as is the good, ſo is the ſinner; and he that ſwear-"eth, as he that feareth an oath." Mark, he that ſweareth, and he that feareth an oath, do as manifeſtly diſtinguiſh the children of God from wicked men, as clean and unclean, righteous and wicked, ſacrificing and not ſacrificing. This fruit of the tongue plainly ſhews what the tree is that bears it; Iſa. ii. 6. "The vile perſon will ſpeak "villany; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaks." *Loquere, ut videam*, ſaid one; Speak, that I may ſee what you are. Look, what is in the heart, that is vented by the tongue; where the treaſures of grace are in the heart, words miniſtering grace will be in the lips; Pſal. xxxvii. 30. "The mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh

" wiſdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; for the law of the " Lord is in his heart." To this ſenſe we muſt underſtand that Scripture, Mat. xii. 37. " By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and " by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned." Certainly juſtification and condemnation, in the day of judgment, ſhall not paſs upon us merely for the good or bad words we have ſpoken; but according to the ſtate of the perſon, and frame of the heart. But the meaning is, that our words ſhall juſtify or condemn us in that day, as evidence of the ſtate and frame of the ſoul. We uſe to ſay, ſuch witneſſes hanged a man; the meaning is, the evidence they gave caſt and condemned him O think ſeriouſly of this; if words evidence the ſtate of the ſoul, what a woful ſtate muſt thy ſoul needs be in, whoſe mouth overflows with oaths and curſes! How many witneſſes will be brought in, to caſt thee in the great day? " Your own tongue " ſhall then fall upon you," as the expreſſion is, Pſal. lxiv. 8. And out of your own mouth God will fetch abundant evidence to condemn you. And thus I have opened unto you the evil of vain words and profane oaths; and preſented to your view their ſeveral aggravations. If by theſe things there be a relenting pang upon thine heart, and a ſerious reſolution of reformation, then I ſhall recommend theſe few helps or means to thy peruſal, and conclude this head: And the firſt help is this,

*Help* 1. Seriouſly fix in thy thoughts that ſcripture, Matth. xii. 36. " But I ſay unto you, that every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, " they ſhall give an account thereof in the day of judgment." O let it ſound in thine ears day and night! O ponder them in thy heart! [*I ſay unto you*] I that have always been in the Father's boſom, and do fully know his mind, that I am conſtituted the Judge of quick and dead, and do fully underſtand the rule of judgment, and the whole proceſs thereof, I ſay, and do aſſure you, that [*every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak,*] i. e. every word that hath not a tendency and reference to the glory of God, though there be no other obliquity of evil in them than this, that they want a good end: how much more then, ſcurrilous words, bloody oaths, and blaſphemies? [*Men ſhall give an account thereof;*] that is, ſhall be caſt and condemned to ſuffer the wrath of God for them; as appears by that parallel Scripture, 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5. For as the learned obſerve, there is plainly a *metalepſis* in theſe words: the *antecedent to give an account*, is put for the *conſequent*, puniſhment, and condemnation to hell-fire; the certainty whereof admits but of this one exception, viz. intervenient repentance, or pardon obtained through the blood of Chriſt here before you be preſented at that judgment-ſeat. O then, what a bridle ſhould this text be to thy extravagant tongue! I remember Hierom was wont to ſay, ' Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, methinks I ſtill hear the ' ſound of theſe words in mine ear, Ariſe, ye dead, and come to ' judgment.' O that the ſound of theſe words may be always in your ears!

*Help* 2. Conſider before you ſpeak, and be not raſh to utter words without knowledge. He that ſpeaks what he thinks not, ſpeaks *hypocritically;* and he that thinks not what to ſpeak, ſpeaks *inconſiderately.* You have cauſe to weigh your words before you deliver them by your tongue; for whether you do, or do not, the Lord *pondereth* them: records are kept of them, elſe you could not be called to an account for them, as I ſhewed you, you muſt.

*Help* 3. Reſign up your tongue to God every day, and beg him to guide and keep it. So did David, Pſal. cxli. 3. "Set a watch, O "Lord, before my mouth, and keep thou the door of my lips." Beg him to keep you from provocations and temptations; or, if you fall into them, intreat him for ſtrength to rule your ſpirits in them, that you may not be conquered by temptations.

*Help* 4. But above all, labour to get your ſouls cleanſed and purified by faith, poſſeſſed with ſaving and gracious principles: all other means will be ineffectual without this. O ſee the vileneſs of thy nature, and the neceſſity of a change to paſs upon it! Firſt make the tree good, and then his fruit good: a new nature will produce new words and actions. To bind your ſouls with vows and reſolutions, while you are ſtrangers to a regenerate work, is to bind Samſon with green withs, whilſt his locks remain upon his head. I will ſhut up this with the advice of that divine poet, Mr George Herbert; it may be, it may affect thee, and run in thy thoughts when thou art alone.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain;
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuſe.
Luſt and wine plead a pleaſure; avarice gain:
But the cheap ſwearer, through his open ſluice,
Lets his ſoul run for nought, as little fearing.
Were I an Epicure, I could hate ſwearing.

When thou doſt tell another's jeſt, therein
Omit the oaths which true wit cannot need:
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the ſin.
He pares his apple that will cleanly feed.
Play not away the virtue of that name,
Which is thy beſt ſtake when grief makes thee tame.

The cheapeſt ſins moſt dearly puniſh'd are,
Becauſe to ſhun them alſo is ſo cheap;
For we have wit to mark them, and to ſpare.
O crumble not away thy ſoul's fair heap.
If thou wilt die, the gates of hell are broad,
Pride and full ſins have made the way a road.

CAUTION III.

THE next danger I ſhall give you warning of, is the ſin of *uncleanneſs*; with which I fear too many of the rude and looſer ſort of ſeamen defile themſelves; and poſſibly, the temptations to this ſin are advantaged, and ſtrengthened upon them more than others, by their condition and employments. Let no man be offended that I here give warning of this evil: I intend to aſperſe no man's perſon, or raiſe up jealouſy againſt any; but would faithfully diſcharge my duty to all, and that in all things. It was the complaint of Salvian* many hundred years ago, that he could not ſpeak againſt the vices of men, but one or other would thus object; 'There he meant me; 'he hit me:' and ſo ſtorm and fret. 'Alas (as he replieth) it is not 'we that ſpeak to you, but your own conſcience; we ſpeak to the 'order, but conſcience ſpeaks to the perſon.' I ſhall uſe no other apology in this caſe. That this ſin is a dreadful gulph, a quick-ſand that hath ſucked in, and deſtroyed thouſands, is truly apparent both from ſcripture and experience. Solomon tells us, Prov. xxii. 14. that it is a "deep ditch, into which ſuch as are abhorred of the Lord ſhall "fall." Oh! the multitudes of dead that are there! and if ſo, I cannot in duty to God, or in love to you, be ſilent, where the danger is ſo great. It is both needleſs, and beſides my intention here is to inſiſt largely upon the explication of the particulars in which uncleanneſs is diſtributed: the more ordinary and common ſins of this kind are known by the names of adultery and fornication. The latter is when ſingle perſons come together out of the ſtate of marriage. The former is, when at leaſt one of the perſons committing uncleanneſs is contracted in marriage. This now is the evil I ſhall warn you of. And, that thou mayeſt never fall into this pit, I ſhall endeavour to hedge and fence up thy way to it by theſe enſuing arguments: and, oh! that the light of every argument may be powerfully reflected upon your conſcience! Many men are wiſe in generals, but very vain ἐν διαλογισμοις, in the reaſonings or imaginations, as the apoſtle calls them, Rom. i. 21. i. e. in their *practical inferences*. They are good at ſpeculation, but bunglers at application: but it is truth in the particulars, that, like an hot iron, pierces; and, oh! that you may find theſe to be ſuch in your ſoul! To that end conſider,

*Arg.* 1. The names and titles by which this ſin is known in ſcripture, are very vile and baſe. The Spirit of God, doubtleſs, hath put ſuch odious names upon it, on purpoſe to deter and affright men from it. In general it is called *luſt*; and ſo (as one notes) it beareth the name of its mother: it is *uncleanneſs* in the abſtract, Numb. v. 19. filthineſs itſelf; *an abomination*, Ezek. xxii. 11. And they that commit it are called *abominable*, Rev. xxi. 8. Varro ſaith, the word imports that which is not lawful to mention; or rather, abominable



* *Gubr. Dei, lib. 4. Salv.*

perſons, ſuch as are not fit for the ſociety of men, ſuch as ſhould be hiſſed out of all men's company: they are rather to be reckoned to beaſts than men. Yea, the ſcripture compares them to the filthieſt of beaſts, even to dogs. When Iſhboſheth charged this ſin upon Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 8. "Am I a dog's head, (ſaith he) that thou chargeſt "me with a fault concerning this woman?" And in Deut. xxiii. 18. the hire of a whore," and the "price of a dog," are put together. The expreſſion of this luſt in words or geſture, is called *neighing*, Jer. v. 8. Even as fed horſes do, that ſcatter their luſt promiſcuouſly. Or, if the ſcripture ſpeaks of them as men, yet it allows them but the external ſhape of men, not the underſtanding of men. Among the Jews they were called fools in Iſrael, 2 Sam. xiii. 13. and ſo Prov. vi. 32. "Whoſo committeth adultery with a woman, "lacketh underſtanding." And ſinners, Luke vii. 37. "And be-"hold a woman that was a [ſinner,]" that is, an eminent notorious ſinner: by which term the ſcripture decyphers an unclean perſon, as if, among ſinners, there were none of ſuch a prodigious ſtature in ſin as they. And we find, that when the Spirit of God would ſet forth any ſin by an odious name, he calls it adultery; ſo idolatry is called adultery, Ezek. xvi. 32. And indeed this ſpiritual and corporeal adultery oftentimes are found in the ſame perſons. They that give themſelves up to the one, are, by the righteous hand of God given up to the other, as it is too manifeſtly and frequently exemplified in the world. So earthly-mindedneſs hath this name put upon it on purpoſe to affright men from it, Jam. iv. 4. Now certainly God would never borrow the name of this ſin to ſet out the evil of other ſins, if it were not moſt vile and abominable. It is called the ſin of the Gentiles, or heathens, 1 Theſſ. iv. 5. And, oh! that we could ſay, it were only among them that know not God! How then are you able to look theſe ſcriptures in the face, and not bluſh? O what a ſin is this! Art thou willing to be ranked with fools, dogs, ſinners, heathens, and take thy lot with them? God hath planted that affection of ſhame in thy nature to be as a guard againſt ſuch filthy luſts; it is a ſin that hath filthineſs enough in it to defile the tongue that mentions it, Epheſ. v. 3.

*Arg.* 2. It is a ſin that the God of heaven hath often prohibited, and ſeverely condemned in the word, which abundantly declares his abhorrence of it. You have prohibition upon prohibition, and threatning upon threatning in the word againſt it; Exod. xx. 14. "Thou ſhalt not commit adultery." This was delivered upon mount Sinai with the greateſt ſolemnity and terror by the mouth of God himſelf. Turn to, and ponder the following ſcriptures among many others, Prov. v. 2, 3, 4. Acts v. 29. Rom. i. 24, 29. Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 13,—18. 2 Cor. xii. 21. Gal. v. 29. Eph. v. 3. Col. iii. 5. 1 Theſſ. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5. Heb. xii. 16. Heb. xiii. 4. All theſe, with many others, are the true ſayings of God: by them thou ſhalt be tried in the laſt day. Now, conſider how terrible it will be

to have ſo many words of God, and ſuch terrible ones too as moſt of thoſe are, to be brought in and pleaded againſt thy ſoul in that day! Mountains and hills may depart, but theſe words ſhall not depart: heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but not one tittle of the word ſhall paſs away. Believe it, ſinner, as ſure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet, they ſhall one day take hold of thee, though we poor worms who plead them with thee, die and periſh: Zech. i. 5, 6. The Lord tells us it ſhall not fall to the ground. Which is a borrowed ſpeech from a dart that is flung with a weak hand; it goes not home to the mark, but falls to the ground by the way. None of theſe words ſhall ſo fall to the ground.

*Arg.* 3. It is a ſin that defiles and deſtroys the body; 1 Cor. vi. 18. "He that committeth adultery, ſinneth againſt his own body." In moſt other ſins the body is the *inſtrument*, here it is the *object* againſt which the ſin is committed: that body of thine, which ſhould be the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, is turned into a ſtye of filthineſs; yea, it not only *defiles*, but deſtroys it. Job calls it a "fire that burneth "to deſtruction," Job xxxi. 12. or as the Septuagint reads it, a fire that burneth in all the members. It is a ſin that God hath plagued with ſtrange and terrible diſeaſes; that Morbus Gallicus, and Sudor Anglicus, and that Plica Polonica, whereof you may read in Bolton's four laſt things, page 30. and Sclater on Rom. i. 30. Theſe were judgments ſent immediately by God's own hand, to correct the new ſins and enormities of the world; for they ſeem to put the beſt phyſicians beſides their books. O how terrible is it to lie groaning under the ſad effects of this ſin! As Solomon tells us, Prov. v. 11. "And "thou mourn at the laſt, when thy fleſh and thy body are conſumed." To this ſenſe ſome expound that terrible text, Heb. xiii. 4. "Mar-"riage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremon-"gers and adulterers God will judge;" i. e. with ſome remarkable judgment inflicted on them in this world: if it eſcape the puniſhment of men, it ſhall not eſcape the vengeance of God. Ah! with what comfort may a man lie down upon a ſick-bed, when the ſickneſs can be looked upon as a fatherly viſitation coming in mercy? But thou that ſhorteneſt thy life, and bringeſt ſickneſs on thyſelf by ſuch a ſin, art the devil's martyr; and to whom canſt thou turn in ſuch a day for comfort?

*Arg.* 4. Conſider what an indelible blot it is to thy nature, which can never be wiped away; though thou eſcape with thy life, yet, as one ſays, thou ſhalt be burnt in the hand, yea, branded in the forehead. What a foul ſcare is that upon the face of David himſelf, which abides to this day? "He was upright in all things, ſave in the "matter of Uriah." And how was he ſlighted by his own children and ſervants after he had committed this ſin! compare 1 Sam. ii. 30. with 2 Sam. xi. 10, 11. "A wound and diſhonour ſhall he get; "and his reproach ſhall not be wiped away. This is to give thine "honour to another," Prov. v. 9. The ſhame and reproach at-

tending it ſhould be a preſervative from it. Indeed the devil tempts to it by hopes of ſecreſy and concealment; but though many other ſins lie hid, and poſſibly ſhall never come to light until that day of manifeſtation of all hidden things, yet this is a ſin that is moſt uſually diſcovered. Under the law, God appointed an extraordinary way for the diſcovery of it, Numb. v. 13. And to this day the providence of God doth often very ſtrangely bring it to light, though it be a deed of darkneſs: the Lord hath many times brought ſuch perſons, either by terror of conſcience, phrenſy, or ſome other means, to be the publiſhers and proclaimers of their own ſhame. Yea, obſerve this, ſaid the reverend Mr Hilderſham on the fourth of John, even thoſe that are moſt cunning to conceal and hide it from the eyes of the world, yet through the juſt judgment of God, every one ſuſpects and condemns them for it: this daſhes in pieces, at one ſtroke, that veſſel in which the precious ointment of a good name is carried. A fool in Iſrael ſhall be thy title; and even children ſhall point at thee.

*Arg.* 5. It ſcatters thy ſubſtance, and roots up the foundation of thy eſtate; Job xxxi. 12. "It roots up all thy increaſe. "Strangers "ſhall be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours ſhall be in the "houſe of a ſtranger," Prov. v. 10. "For by means of a whoriſh "woman, a man is brought to a morſel of bread," Prov. vi. 26. It gives rags for its livery (ſaith one) and though it be *furthered* by the fulneſs, yet it is *followed* with a morſel of bread. This is one of thoſe temporal judgments with which God puniſhes the unclean perſon in this life. The word Delilah, which is the name of a harlot, is conceived to come from a root that ſignifies to exhauſt, drain, or draw dry. This ſin will quickly exhauſt the fulleſt eſtate; and, oh! what a dreadful thing will this be, when God ſhall require an account of thy ſtewardſhip in the great day! how righteous is it, that that man ſhould be fuel to the wrath of God, whoſe health and wealth have been ſo much fuel to maintain the flame of luſt! O how laviſh of their eſtates are ſinners to ſatisfy their luſts! if the members of Chriſt be ſick, or in priſon, they may there periſh and ſtarve before they will relieve them; but to obtain their luſts, O how expenſive! "Aſk me never ſo much, and I will give it," ſaith Shechem, Gen. xxxiv. 12. "Aſk what thou wilt, and it ſhall be given thee," ſaid Herod to the daughter of Herodias. Well, you are liberal in ſpending treaſures upon your luſts; and believe it, God will ſpend treaſures of wrath to puniſh you for your luſts. It had been a thouſand times better for thee thou hadſt never had an eſtate, that thou hadſt begged thy bread from door to door, than to have ſuch a ſad reckoning as thou ſhalt ſhortly have for it.

*Arg.* 6. O ſtand off from this ſin, becauſe it is a pit, out of which very few have been recovered that have fallen therein. Few are the footſteps of returners from this den. The longer a man lives in it, the leſs power he hath to leave it. It is not only a *damning*, but an

*infatuating* ſin. The danger of falling this way muſt needs be great, and the fall very deſperate; becauſe few that fall into it do ever riſe again. I ſhall lay two very terrible ſcriptures before you to this purpoſe, either of them enough to drive thee ſpeedily to Chriſt, or to drive thee out of thy wits; the one is that, Eccl. vii. 26. "And I "find more bitter than death, the woman whoſe heart is ſnares and "nets, and her hands as bands: Whoſo pleaſeth God ſhall eſcape "from her, but the ſinner ſhall be taken by her." The argument which the Spirit of God uſes here to diſſuade from this ſin, is taken from the *ſubject*; they that fall into it, for the moſt part, are perſons in whom God has no delight, and ſo in judgment are delivered up to it, and never recovered by grace from it. The other is that in Prov. xxii. 14. "The mouth of a ſtrange woman is a deep pit; he that is "abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall therein." O terrible word! able to daunt the heart of the ſecureſt ſinner. Your whores *embrace* you, yea, but God *abhors* you! You have their *love*, Oh but you are under God's *hatred!* What ſay you to theſe two ſcriptures? If you are not atheiſts, methinks ſuch a word from the mouth of God, ſhould ſtrike like a dart through thy ſoul. And upon this account it is, that they never are recovered, becauſe God has no delight in them. If this be not enough, view one ſcripture more, Prov. ii. 18, 19. "For her houſe inclineth unto death, and her paths unto "the dead: None that go to her, return again, neither take they "hold of the paths of life." Reader, if thou be a perſon addicted to this ſin, go thy ways, and think ſeriouſly what a caſe thou art in. *None return again*, i. e. a very few of many: The examples of ſuch as have been recovered are very rare. Pliny tells us, the mermaids are commonly ſeen in green meadows, and have inchanting voices; but there are always found heaps of dead men's bones lying by them. This may be but a fabulous ſtory: But I am ſure, it is true of the harlot, whoſe ſyren ſongs have allured thouſands to their inevitable deſtruction. It is a captivating ſin, that leads away the ſinner in triumph; they cannot deliver their ſouls; Prov. vii. 22. "He goeth "after her ſtraightway, as an ox goeth to the ſlaughter, or as a [fool] "to the correction of the ſtocks." Mark, a fool; it dementates and befools men, takes away their underſtanding; the Septuagint renders it, ωσπερ κυων επι δεσμως, as a dog to the collar; or, like as we uſe to ſay, a dog in a ſtring. I have read of one, that having by this ſin waſted his body, was told by phyſicians, that except he left it, he would quickly loſe his eyes: He anſwered, if it be ſo, then *vale lumen amicum*, farewel ſweet light. And I remember, Luther writes of a certain noblemen in his country, who was ſo beſotted with the ſin of whoredom, that he was not aſhamed to ſay, that if he might live here for ever, and be carried from one ſtew to another, he would never deſire any other heaven. The greateſt conquerors, that have ſubdued kingdoms, and ſcorned to be commanded by any, have been miſerably enſlaved and captivated by this luſt.

O think ſadly upon this argument! God often gives them up to impertinency, and will not ſpend a rod upon them to reclaim them. See Hoſ. iv. 14. Rev. xxii. 11.

*Arg.* 7. And then in the *7th* place, thoſe few that have been recovered by repentance out of it, O how bitter hath God made it to their ſouls! "I find it (ſaith Solomon) more bitter than death," Eccl. vii. 26. Death is a very bitter thing; O what a ſtruggling and reluctance is there in nature againſt it! But this is more bitter. Poor David found it ſo, when he roared under thoſe bloody laſhes of conſcience for it, in Pſal. li. Ah! when the Lord ſhall open the poor ſinner's eyes, to ſee the horror and guilt he hath hereby contracted upon his own poor ſoul, it will haunt him as a ghoſt, day and night, and terrify his ſoul with dreadful forms and repreſentations! O dear bought pleaſure, if this were all it ſhould coſt! What is now become of the pleaſure of ſin? O what gall and wormwood wilt thou taſte, when once the Lord ſhall bring thee to a ſight of it! The Hebrew word for repentance *(Nacham,)* and the Greek word *(Metamelia,)* the one ſignifies an irking of the ſoul, and the other ſigniſies, after-grief: Yea, it is called, a renting of the heart, as if it were torn in pieces in a man's breaſt. Aſk ſuch a poor ſoul, what it thinks of ſuch courſes now? Oh! now it loaths, abhors itſelf for them. Aſk him, if he dare ſin in that kind again? You may as well aſk me (will he anſwer) whether I will thruſt my hand into the fire. Oh! it breeds an indignation in him againſt himſelf. That word, αγανακτησιν, 2 Cor. vii. 11. ſignifies the riſing of the ſtomach with very rage, and being ſick with anger. Religious wrath is the fierceſt wrath. O what a furnace is the breaſt of a poor penitent! what fumes, what heats do abound in it, whilſt the ſin is even before him, and the ſenſe of the guilt upon him? One night of carnal pleaſure will keep thee many days and nights upon the rack of horror, if ever God give thee repentance unto life.

*Arg.* 8. And if thou never repent, as indeed but few do that fall into this ſin, then conſider how God will follow thee with eternal vengeance: Thou ſhalt have flaming fire for burning luſt. This is a ſin that hath the ſcent of fire and brimſtone with it, wherever you meet with it in ſcripture. The harlot's gueſts are lodged in the *depths of hell*, Prov. ix. 18. No more perfumed beds; they muſt now lie down in flames. Whoremongers ſhall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone; which is the ſecond death, Rev. xxi. 8. Such ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God and Chriſt, 1 Cor. vi. 9. No dog ſhall come into the New Jeruſalem; there ſhall in no wiſe enter in any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination. You have ſpent your ſtrength upon ſin, and now God ſets himſelf a work to ſhew the glory of his power in puniſhing, Rom ix. 22. The wrath of God is tranſacted upon them in hell by his own immediate hand, Heb. x. 30. Becauſe no creature is ſtrong

enough to convey all his wrath, and it muſt all be poured out upon them, therefore he himſelf will torment them for ever with his own immediate power: Now he will *ſtir up all his wrath*, and ſinners ſhall know the price of their pleaſures. The puniſhment of Sodom is a little map of hell, as I may ſay. O how terrible a day was that upon thoſe unclean wretches! But that fire was not of many days continuance: When it had conſumed them, and their houſes, it went out for want of matter: but here, the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone, kindles it. The pleaſure was quickly gone, but the ſting and torment abide for ever. "Who knoweth the power of his anger? Even according to his fear, ſo is his wrath," Pſalm xc. 11. Oh conſider, how will his almighty power rack and torment thee! Think on this when ſin comes with a ſmiling face towards thee in the temptation. O think! If the human nature of Chriſt recoiled, when his cup of wrath was given him to drink; if he were ſore amazed at it, how ſhalt thou, a poor worm, bear and grapple with it for ever?

*Arg.* 9. Conſider further, how cloſely ſoever thou carrieſt thy wickedneſs in this world, tho' it ſhould never be diſcovered here, yet there is a day coming when all will out, and that before angels and men. God will rip up thy ſecret ſins in the face of that great congregation at the day of judgment: Then that which was done in ſecret ſhall be proclaimed as upon the houſe-top, Luke xii. 3. "Then God will judge the ſecrets of men," Rom. ii. 16. "the "hidden things of darkneſs will be brought into the open light." Sinner, there will be no ſculking for thee in the grave, no declining this bar; thou refuſedſt, indeed, to come to the *throne of grace*, when God invited thee, but there will be no refuſing to appear before the *bar of juſtice*, when Chriſt ſhall ſummon thee. And as thou canſt not decline appearing, ſo neither canſt thou then palliate and hide thy wickedneſs any longer; for then ſhall the books be opened; the book of God's omniſcience, and the book of thine own conſcience, wherein all thy ſecret villany is recorded; for though it ceaſed to ſpeak to thee, yet it ceaſed not to write and record thy actions. If thy ſhameful ſins ſhould be divulged now, it would make thee tear off thy hair with indignation; but then all will be diſcovered: Angels and men ſhall point at thee, and ſay, lo, this is the man, this is he that carried it ſo ſmoothly in the world. Mr Thomas Fuller relates a ſtory of Ottocar king of Bohemia, 'who refuſing to do his 'homage to Rodulphus the firſt emperor, being at laſt ſorely chaſtiſed 'with war, condeſcended to do him homage privately in a tent; but 'the tent was ſo contrived by the emperor's ſervants, (ſaith the 'Hiſtorian) that, by drawing one cord, it was taken all away, and 'ſo Ottocar preſented on his knees, doing homage to the emperor in 'the view of three armies.' O ſirs, you think to carry it cloſely, you wait for the twilight, that none may ſee you; but, alas! it will be to no end, this day will diſcover it; and then what confuſion and

everlaſting ſhame will cover thee! Will not this work then?

*Arg.* 10. Laſtly, conſider but one thing more, and I have done. By this ſin thou doſt not only damn thine own ſoul, but draweſt another to hell with thee. This ſin is not as a ſingle bullet that kills but one, but as a chain-ſhot, it kills many, two at leaſt, unleſs God give repentance. And if he ſhould give thee repentance, yet the other party may never repent, and ſo periſh for ever through thy wickedneſs; and, oh! what a ſad conſideration will that be to thee, that ſuch a poor ſoul is in hell, or likely to go thither by thy means? Thou haſt made faſt a ſnare upon a ſoul, which thou canſt not untie; thou haſt done that which may be matter of ſorrow to thee as long as thou liveſt; but though thou canſt grieve for it, thou canſt not remedy it. In other ſins it is not ſo: If thou hadſt ſtolen another's goods, reſtitution might be made to the injured party, but here can be none: if thou hadſt murdered another, thy ſin was thine own, not his that was murdered by thee: but this is a complicated ſin, defiling both at once; and if neither repent, then, oh! what a ſad greeting will theſe poor wretches have in hell! how will they curſe the day that ever they ſaw each other's face! O what an aggravation of their miſery will this be! For look, as it will be matter of joy in heaven, to behold ſuch there as we have been inſtrumental to ſave, ſo muſt it needs be a ſtinging aggravation of the miſery of the damned, to look upon thoſe who have been the inſtruments and means of their damnation. Oh, methinks, if there be any tenderneſs at all in thy conſcience, if this ſin have not totally brawned and ſtupified thee, theſe arguments ſhould pierce like a ſword through thy guilty ſoul. Reader, I beſeech thee, by the mercies of God, if thou haſt defiled thy ſoul by this abominable ſin, ſpeedily to repent. O get the blood of ſprinkling upon thee; there is yet mercy for ſuch a wretch as thou art, if thou wilt accept the terms of it. "Such were ſome of you, but ye are waſh-" ed," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Publicans and harlots may enter into the kingdom of God, Matth. xxi. 31. Though but few ſuch are recovered, yet how knoweſt thou but the hand of mercy may pull thee as a brand out of the fire, if now thou wilt return and ſeek it with tears? Though it be a *fire that conſumeth unto deſtruction*, as Job calls it, Job xxxi. 12. yet it is not an unquenchable fire, the blood of Chriſt can quench it.

And for you whom God hath kept hitherto from the contagion of it, O bleſs the Lord, and uſe all God's means for the prevention of it. The ſeeds of this ſin are in thy nature; no thanks to thee, but reſtraining grace, that thou art not delivered up to it alſo. And that thou mayeſt be kept out of this pit, conſcionably practiſe theſe few directions.

*Direct.* 1. Beg of God a clean heart, renewed and ſanctified by ſaving grace; all other endeavours do but palliate a cure: the root of this is deep in thy nature; O get that mortified, Matth. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed fornication, adulteries." 1 Pet. ii. 11,

12. "Abſtain from fleſhly luſts——having your converſation honeſt." The luſt muſt firſt be ſubdued, before the converſation can be honeſt.

*Direct.* 2. Walk in the fear of God all the day long, and in the ſenſe of his omniſcient eye that is ever upon thee. This kept Joſeph from this ſin, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this wickedneſs and ſin "againſt God?" Conſider, the darkneſs hideth not from him, but ſhineth as the light. If thou couldſt find a place where the eye of God ſhould not diſcover thee, it were ſomewhat: thou dareſt not to act this wickedneſs in the preſence of a child, and wilt thou adventure to commit it before the face of God? ſee that argument, Prov. v. 20, 21. "And why wilt thou, my ſon, be raviſhed with a ſtrange "woman, and embrace the boſom of a ſtranger? For the ways of "man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his "goings."

*Direct.* 3. Avoid lewd company, and the ſociety of unclean perſons; they are but *panders* for luſt. *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* The tongues of ſinners do caſt fire-balls into the hearts of each other, which the corruption within is eaſily kindled and enflamed by.

*Direct.* 4. Exerciſe thyſelf in thy calling diligently; it will be an excellent means of preventing this ſin. It is a good obſervation that one hath, That Iſrael was ſafer in the brick-kilns in Egypt, than in the plains of Moab, 2 Sam. xi. 2. "And it came to paſs in the even-"tide, that David aroſe from off his bed, and walked on the roof of "the king's houſe;" and this was the occaſion of his fall. See 1 Tim. v. 11, 13.

*Direct.* 5. Put a reſtraint upon thine appetite: feed not to exceſs. Fulneſs of bread and idleneſs were the ſins of Sodom, that occaſioned ſuch an exuberancy of luſt*. "They are like fed horſes, every "one neighing after his neighbour's wife. When I had fed them to "the full, then they committed adultery, and aſſembled themſelves "by troops in the harlot's houſes," Jer. v. 7, 8. This is a ſad requital of the bounty of God, in giving us the enjoyment of the creatures, to make them fuel to luſt, and inſtruments of ſin.

*Direct.* 6. Make choice of a meet yoke-fellow, and delight in her you have choſen. This is a lawful remedy: See 1 Cor. vii. 9. God ordained it, Gen. ii. 21. But herein appears the corruption of nature, that men delight to tread by-paths, and forſake the way which God hath appointed; as that divine poet, Mr Herbert, ſaith,

If God had laid all common, certainly
Man would have been the cloſer: but ſince now
God hath impall'd us, on the contrary,
Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plow.



* *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.*

O what were man, might he himſelf miſplace!
Sure, to be croſs, he would ſhift feet and face.

Stolen waters are ſweeter to them than thoſe waters they might lawfully drink at their own fountain: But withal know, it is not the having, but the delighting in a lawful wife, as God requires you to do, that thou muſt be a fence againſt this ſin. So Solomon, Prov. v. 19. "Let her be as the loving hind, and pleaſant roe; let her "breaſts ſatisfy thee at all times, and be thou raviſhed always with "her love."

*Direct.* 7. Take heed of running on in a courſe of ſin (eſpecially ſuperſtition and idolatry; in which caſes, and as a puniſhment of which evils, God often gives up men to theſe vile affections, Rom. i. 25, 26. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie; [worſhipped] "and ſerved the creature more than the Creator, who is bleſſed for "ever, Amen. [For this cauſe] God gave them up to vile affec-"tions," &c. They that defile their ſouls by idolatrous practices, God ſuffers, as a juſt recompence, their bodies alſo to be defiled with uncleanneſs, that ſo their ruin may be haſtened. Let the admirers of traditions beware of ſuch a judicial tradition as this is. Woe to him that is thus delivered by the hand of an angry God! No puniſhment in the world like this, when God puniſhes ſin with ſin: when he ſhall ſuffer thoſe κοινας εννοιας, thoſe common notices of conſcience to be quenched, and all reſtraints to be moved out of the way of ſin, it will not be long e'er that ſinner come to his own place.

## CAUTION IV.

IN the next place I ſhall make bold to expoſtulate a little with your conſciences concerning the precious mercies you have received, and the ſolemn promiſes you have bound yourſelves withal for the obtaining of thoſe mercies. I fear God hath many bankrupt debtors among you, that have dealt ſlipperily and unfaithfully with him; that have not rendered to the Lord according to the great things he hath done for them, nor according to thoſe good things they have vowed to the mighty God of Jacob. But truly if thou be a *deſpiſer* of mercy, thou ſhalt be a *pattern* of wrath. God will *remember* them in fury who *forget* him in his favours. I will tell you what a grave and eminent miniſter once told his people (dealing with them about this ſin of unthankfulneſs for mercy); and I pray God it may affect you duly. * 'Let us all mourn (ſaith he) and take on; we are all behind 'hand with God. The Chriſtian world is become bankrupt, quite 'broke, makes no return to God for his love. He is iſſuing out 'proceſs to ſeize upon body, goods, and life, and will be put off no 'longer. Bloody bailiffs are abroad for bad debtors all the world 'over. Chriſtians are broke, and make no return, and God is break-

* Mr Lockyer on Col. i. p. 113.

‘ing all. He cannot have what he would have, what he ſhould ‘have, he will take what he can get: for money he will take goods, ‘limbs, arms, legs; he will have his own out of your ſkin, out of ‘your blood, out of your bodies and ſouls. He is ſetting the Chriſ‘tian world as light and as low as they have ſet his love. Ah, Lord, ‘what a time do we live in! long-ſuffering is at an end, mercy will ‘be righted in juſtice, juſtice will have all behind, it will be paid to the ‘utmoſt farthing; it will ſet abroach your blood, but it will have all ‘behind,’ &c.

Do you hear, ſouls? Is it not this ſad news to ſome of you, who have received vaſt ſums of mercy, and given God your bond for the repayment of him in praiſe and anſwerable fruit, and yet forfeited all and loſt your credit with God? O how can you look God in the face, with whom you have dealt ſo perfidiouſly! I am now come in the name of God to demand his due of you; to call to remembrance the former receipts of mercy which you mind not, but God doth, and there is a witneſs in your boſom that doth, and will one day witneſs to your faces, that you have dealt perfidiouſly with your God. Your ſouls have been the *graves* of mercy, which ſhould have been as ſo many gardens where they ſhould have lived and flouriſhed. I am come now to open thoſe graves, and view thoſe mercies that your unthankfulneſs hath killed and buried, to lay them before your eyes, and ſee whether your ungrateful hearts will bleed upon them. Buried mercies are not loſt for ever; they ſhall as certainly have a day of * reſurrection as thyſelf: it were better for thee they ſhould have a reſurrection now in thy heart, than to riſe as witneſſes againſt thee, when thou ſhalt riſe out of the duſt: that will be a terrible reſurrection indeed, when thou ſhalt come to plead againſt thy ſoul. Nothing pleads more dreadfully againſt a ſoul than abuſed mercy doth. But I ſhall come to the particulars upon which I interrogate your conſciences; and I pray deal truly and ingenuouſly in anſwering theſe queries.

*Quer.* 1. And, firſt, I ſhall demand of you, whether you never had experience of the power and goodneſs of God, in reſtoring you to health from dangerous ſickneſs and diſeaſes? Have you not ſometimes had the ſentence of death in yourſelves? And that poſſibly when you have been in remote parts, far from your friends and relations, and deſtitute of all means and accommodations. Did you not ſay in that condition, as Hezekiah did in a like caſe? Iſa. xxxviii. 10, 11, 12. “I ſaid, in the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the “grave: I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall “not ſee the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I ſhall be“hold man no more with the inhabitants of the world:” Remember thyſelf, Man; canſt not thou call to mind the day when the arrows of death came whiſking by thee, and it may be, hit thoſe next thee; took away thoſe that were as lively and luſty as thyſelf, when

*There is a double reſurrection of mercy; a reſurrection of mercy in mercy, and a reſurrection of mercy in wrath. It is the firſt I now labour for, and that to prevent the ſecond.

you began your voyage, and yet they were caſt for death, thou for life, and that when there was but an hair's breadth betwixt thee and the grave? Tell me, ſoul, what friend was that who ſtood by thee then, when thou waſt forſaken of all thy friends? When it may be thy companions ſtood ready to throw thee over-board, who was it that pitied and remembered thee in thy low eſtate? Who was it that rebuked thy diſeaſe! or, (as * one very aptly expreſſes it) 'reſtrained 'the humours of thy body from overflowing and drowning thy life? 'For, when they are let out in a ſickneſs, they would overflow and 'drown it, as the waters would the earth, if God ſhould not ſay to 'them, ſtay, you proud waves.' Who was it, man, that when thy body was brought low and weak, and like a crazy rotten ſhip in a ſtorm, took in water on all ſides, ſo that all the phyſicians in the world could not have ſtopped thoſe leaks? Conſider what hand that was which quieted and calmed the tempeſtuous ſea, *careened* and mended thy crazy body, and launched thee into the world again, as whole, as ſound, as ſtrong as ever? Was it not the Lord that hath done all this for thee? Did he not keep back thy ſoul from the pit, and thy life from periſhing? Yea, when thou waſt chaſtened with pain upon thy bed, (as Elihu ſpeaks) Job xxxiii. 19, 20, 21. and the multitude of thy bones with ſtrong pains, ſo that thy life abhorred bread, and thy ſoul dainty meat; thy fleſh conſumed away, that it could not be ſeen, and thy bones that were not ſeen, ſtuck out: Yet then, as it is verſe 28. he delivered thy ſoul from going down into the pit, and cauſed thy life to ſee the light. Had the lamp of life been then extinguiſhed, thou hadſt gone down into endleſs darkneſs; hell had ſhut her mouth upon thee. Now tell me ſoul, what haſt thou done with this precious mercy? Haſt thou walked before the Lord in a deep ſenſe thereof, and anſwered his end therein, which was to lead thee to repentance? Or hath thy ſtupid or diſingenuous heart forgotten it, and loſt all ſenſe of it, ſo that God's end is fruſtrated, and thy ſalvation not a jot furthered thereby? Oh! if it be ſo, woe to thee! for the blood of this mercy, which thy ingratitude hath murdered, like the blood of Abel, cries to God againſt thee. What a wretch art thou thus to requite the Lord for ſuch a mercy! He ſaw thy tears, and heard thy groans, and ſaid within himſelf, he ſhall not die, but live. Alas, poor creature! if I cut him off now, he is eternally loſt: I will ſend him back a few years more into the world. I will try him once more, it may be he will bear ſome fruits to me from this deliverance; and if ſo, well; if not, I will cut him down hereafter: He ſhall be ſet at liberty upon his good behaviour a little longer. And is all this nothing in thine eyes? Wretch that thou art, doſt thou forget and ſlight ſuch a favour as this? Is it worth no more in thine eyes? Well, it would be worth ſomething in the eyes of the poor damned ſouls, if they might have ſo many years cut out of their eter-

* Mr Thomas Goodwin.

nity, for a mere intermiſſion of their torments, much more as a time of patience and mercy. O conſider what pity and goodneſs thou haſt abuſed!

*Query* 2. Waſt thou never caſt upon miſerable ſtraits and extremities, wherein the good providence of God relieved and ſupplied thee? How many of you have been beaten ſo long at ſea, by reaſon of contrary winds and other accidents, until your proviſions have been exhauſted and ſpent. To how ſhort allowance have you been kept. And what a mercy would you have eſteemed it, if you could but have ſatisfied nature with a full draught of water. Certainly, this hath been the caſe with many of you. O what a price and value did you then ſet upon theſe common mercies, which at other times have been ſlightly overlooked! And when you have ſeen no hopes of relief, have you not looked ſadly one upon another? and, it may be, ſaid, as that widow of Sarepta did to the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 12. "And ſhe ſaid, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a "cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a "cruſe; and, behold, I am gathering two ſticks, that I may go in "and dreſs it for me and my ſon, that we may eat it and die." Even ſuch hath been your caſe; yet hath that God, whoſe mercies are over all his works, heard your ſorrows, and provided relief for you, either by ſome ſhip, which providence ſent to relieve you in that diſtreſs, or by altering the winds, and ſending you ſafe to the land before all your proviſions have been ſpent. And haſt thou kept no records of theſe gracious providences? Yea, doſt thou abuſe the creature, when thou art brought again to the full enjoyment of it; and poſſibly receiveſt the creatures, (whoſe worth thou haſt ſo lately ſeen in the want of them) without thankſgiving, or a ſenſible acknowledgment of the goodneſs of God in them? I ſay, doſt thou thus anſwer the expectations of God? Well, beware leſt God teach ſuch an unworthy creature, by woeful experience, that the opening of his hand to give thee a mercy, is worth the opening thy lips to bleſs him for it. Beware leſt that unthankful mouth that will not bleſs the Lord for bread and water, have neither the one nor the other to bleſs him for. I can give you a ſad inſtance in the caſe, and I have found it in the writing of an eminent divine, who ſaid he had it from an eye and ear-witneſs of the truth of it. A young man lying upon his ſick-bed, was always calling for meat; but when the meat he called for was brought unto him, he ſhook and trembled dreadfully at the ſight of it, and that in every part of his body, and ſo continued until his food was carried away. And thus he did as often as any food was brought into his preſence; and not being able to eat one bit, pined away; but before his death he freely acknowledged the juſtice of God in his puniſhment: For, ſaid he, in the time of my health, I ordinarily received my meat without thankſgiving. O let the abuſers and deſpiſers of ſuch mercies fear and tremble!

*Quer.* 3. Have you not been eminently protected and ſaved by the

Lord, in the greateſt dangers and hazards of life; in fights at ſea, when men have dropt down at your right hand, and at your left, and yet the Lord hath covered your heads in the day of battle? And though you have been equally obnoxious to death and danger with others, yet your name was not found among theirs in the liſt of the dead. Or in ſhipwrecks, ah, how narrowly have ſome of you eſcaped! a plank hath been caſt in, you know not how, to ſave you, when your companions, for want of it, have gone down to the bottom; or you have been enabled to ſwim to the ſhore, when others have fainted in the way, and periſhed? In what variety of ſtrange and aſtoniſhing providences hath God walked towards ſome of you, and what returns have you made to God for it? Oh, ſirs! I beſeech you, conſider but theſe two or three things that I ſhall now lay before you to conſider of.

*Conſid.* 1. An heathen will do more for a dung-hill deity than thou, that calleſt thyſelf a Chriſtian, wilt do for the true God, that made heaven and earth, Dan. v. 4. They praiſed the gods of ſilver, and of gold, and of braſs, of iron, wood, and ſtone. When the Philiſtines were delivered from the hand of Samſon, the text ſaith, Judg. xvi. 24. "They praiſed their god," &c. Then Dagon muſt be extolled. O let ſhame cover thy face!

*Conſid.* 2. That the abuſe of mercy and love is a ſin that goes near to the heart of God. Oh! he cannot bear it. It is not the giving out of mercy that troubles him, for that he doth with delight; but the recoiling of his mercies upon him by the creatures ingratitude, this wounds. "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye hor-"ribly afraid." And again, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O "earth," Iſa. i. 2. q. d. O you innocent creatures, which inviolably obſerve the law of your creation, be you all aſtoniſhed, and clothed in black, to ſee nature caſt by ſin ſo far below itſelf, and that in a creature ſo much ſuperior to you as man, who in the very womb was crowned a king, and admitted into the higheſt order of creatures, and ſet as lord and maſter over you; yet doth he act not only below himſelf, but below the very beaſts. "The ox knoweth his owner; (i. e.) there is a kind of gratitude in the beaſts, by which they acknowledge their benefactors that feed and preſerve them. Oh! what a pathetical exclamation is that, Deut. xxxii. 6. "Do you thus "requite the Lord, O fooliſh people, and unwiſe."

*Conſid.* 3. It is a ſin that kindles the wrath of God, and will make it burn dreadfully againſt thee, unthankful ſinner: It ſtirs up the anger of God, in whomſoever it be found, though in the perſon of a ſaint, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. "But Hezekiah rendered not again ac-"cording to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up, "therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Jeruſalem." And ſo you read, Rom. i. that the heathens, becauſe they were not thankful, were given up to vile affections; the ſoreſt plague in the world. It is a ſin that the God of mercy ſcarce knows how to pardon, Jer. v.

7. "How ſhall I pardon thee for this?" This forgetting of the God that ſaves us in our extremities is a ſin that brings deſolation and ruin, the effects of God's high diſpleaſure upon all our temporal enjoyments. See that remarkable ſcripture, Iſa. xvii. 10, 11. "Becauſe "thou haſt [forgotten] the God of [thy ſalvation,] and haſt not "been [mindful] of the rock of [thy ſtrength:] Therefore ſhalt thou "plant pleaſant plants, and ſhall ſet it with ſtrange ſlips: In the day "ſhalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning ſhalt thou "make thy ſeed to flouriſh; but the harveſt ſhall be an heap in the "day of grief, and deſperate ſorrow." The meaning is, that God will blaſt and curſe all thine employments, and thou ſhalt be under "deſperate ſorrow." The meaning is, that God will blaſt and curſe all thine employments, and thou ſhalt be under deſperate ſorrow, by reaſon of the diſappointments of thy hopes.

*Conſid.* 4. It is a ſin that cuts off mercy from you in future ſtraits: If you thus requite the Lord for former mercies, never expect the like in future diſtreſſes. God is not weary of his bleſſings, to caſt them away upon ſuch ſouls that are but graves to them. Mark what a reply God made to the Iſraelites, when they cried unto him for help, being invaded by the Amorites, Judg. x. 11, 12, 13. "Did not I de-"liver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the "children of Ammon, and from the Philiſtines? The Zidonians al-"ſo, and the Amalekites, and ye cried unto me, and I delivered you "out of their hand. Yet ye have forſaken me, and ſerved other "gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more." O ſad world! it is as if the Lord had ſaid, I have tried what mercy and deliverance will do with you, and I ſee you are never the better for it: Deliverance is but ſeed ſown upon the rocks. I will caſt away no more favours upon you; now look to yourſelves, ſhift for yourſelves for time to come; wade through your troubles as well as you can. O brethren! there is nothing more quickly works the ruin of a people than the abuſe of mercy. O, methinks, this text ſhould ſtrike terror into your hearts. How often hath God delivered you? Remember thy eminent deliverance at ſuch a time, in ſuch a country, out of ſuch a deep diſtreſs: God was gracious to thy cry then, thou haſt forgotten and abuſed his mercy; what now, if God ſhould ſay as in the text, therefore I will deliver thee no more? Ah, poor ſoul! what wouldſt thou do then, or to whom wilt thou turn? It may be thou wilt cry to the creatures for help and pity; but, alas! to what purpoſe! They will give as cold and as comfortleſs an anſwer as Samuel gave unto Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16. "And Samuel ſaid unto Saul, Where-"fore haſt thou diſquieted me to bring me up? And Saul anſwer-"ed, I am ſore diſtreſſed; for the Philiſtines make war againſt me, "and God is departed from me, and anſwereth me no more, neither "by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore have I called thee, &c. "Then ſaid Samuel, wherefore then doſt thou aſk of me, ſeeing the "Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?" Oh!

thou wilt be a poor ſhiftleſs creature, if once by abuſing mercy thou make it thine enemy!

*Conſid.* 5. It is breach of vows made in diſtreſs to obtain theſe mercies; they have been eaſily forgotten and violated by thee when thou haſt obtained thy deſire: A word or two to convince you what a further evil lies in this, and how by this conſideration thy ſins come to be buoyed up to a greater height and aggravation of ſinfulneſs; and then I have done with this head.

*A vow is a promiſe made to God, in the things of God.* The obligation of it is, by caſuiſts, judged to be as great as that of an oath. It is a ſacred and ſolemn bond, wherein a ſoul binds to God in lawful things; and being once bound by it, it is a moſt heinous evil to violate it. It is an high piece of diſhoneſty to fail in what we have promiſed to men, ſaith * Dr Hall; but to diſappoint God in our vows, is no leſs than ſacrilege. The act is free and voluntary; but if once a juſt and lawful vow or promiſe hath paſt your lips, ſaith he, you may not be falſe to God in keeping it. It is with us for our vows, as it was with Ananias and Sapphira, for their ſubſtance: "Whilſt "it remained (ſaith Peter) was it not thine own?" He needed not to ſell and give it; but if he will give, he may not reſerve: It is death to ſave ſome; he lies to the holy Ghoſt, that defalks from that which he engaged himſelf to beſtow. If thou haſt vowed to the mighty God of Jacob, look to it that thou be faithful in thy performance; for he is a great and jealous God, and will not be mocked.

Now I am confident there be many among you, that, in your former diſtreſſes, have ſolemnly engaged your ſouls thus to God; that if he would deliver you out of thoſe dangers, and ſpare your lives, you would walk more ſtrictly, and live more holy lives than ever you did. You have, it may be, engaged your ſouls to the Lord againſt thoſe ſins, as drunkenneſs, lying, ſwearing, uncleanneſs, or whatſoever evil it was that your conſcience then ſmote you for; the vows of God (I ſay) are upon many of you. But have you performed thoſe vows that your lips have uttered? Have you dealt truly with God? or have you mocked him, and lied unto him with your lips, and omitted thoſe very duties you promiſed to perform, and returned to the ſelf-ſame evils you have promiſed to forſake? I only put the queſtion, let your conſciences anſwer it. But if it be ſo, indeed, that thou art a perſon that makeſt light of thy engagements to God, as indeed ſeamen's vows and ſick men's promiſes are, for the moſt part, deceitful and ſlippery things, being extorted from them by fear of death, and not from any deep reſentment of the neceſſity, and weight of thoſe duties to which they bind their ſouls: I ſay, if this ſin lie upon any of your ſouls, I adviſe you to go to God ſpeedily, and bewail it; humble yourſelf greatly before him, admire his patience in forbearing you, and pay unto him what your

* Caſes of Conſcience.

lips have promiſed. And to move you thereunto, let theſe conſiderations, among many others, be laid to heart.

*Conſid.* 1. Think ſeriouſly upon the greatneſs of that majeſty whom thou haſt wronged by lying to him, and falſifying thy engagements. O think ſadly on this! it is not man whom thou haſt abuſed, but God; even that God in whoſe hand thy life and breath is. For although (as one truly obſerves) there be not in every vow a formal invocation of God, (God being the proper correlate, and, as it were, a party to every vow, and therefore not formally to be invoked for the conteſtation of it;) yet, there is in every vow an implicit calling God to witneſs; ſo that certainly the obligation of a vow is not one jot beneath that of an oath. Now if God be as a party to whom thou haſt paſt thy promiſe, and that obligation on that ground be ſo great; Oh what haſt thou done! for a poor worm to mock the moſt glorious Majeſty of heaven, and break faith with God; what a dreadful thing is that? if it were but to thy fellow-creature, though the ſin would be great; yet not like unto this. Let me ſay to thee as the prophet Iſaiah, chap. vii. 13. "Is it a ſmall thing for you to weary "men, but will you weary my God alſo?" If you dare to deceive and abuſe men, dare you do ſo by God alſo? Oh! if the exceeding vileneſs of the ſin do not affect thee, yet methinks the danger of provoking ſo dreadful a Majeſty againſt thee ſhould! And therefore conſider,

*Conſid.* 2. That the Lord will moſt certainly be avenged upon thee for theſe things, except thou repent. O read, and tremble at the word of God! Eccleſ. v. 4, 5, 6. "When thou voweſt a vow unto "God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleaſure in fools; pay "that which thou haſt vowed. Better is it that thou ſhouldſt not "vow, than that thou ſhouldſt vow, and not pay. Suffer not thy "mouth to cauſe thy fleſh to ſin, neither ſay thou, before the angel, that it was an error; wherefore [ſhould God be angry] "at thy voice, and [deſtroy] the works of thy hands?" Mark, God will be angry, and in that anger he will deſtroy the work of thy hands, i. e. ſaith Deodate, 'bring thee and all thy actions to 'nought, by reaſon of thy perjury.' Now, the anger of God, which thy breach of promiſe kindles, as appears by this text, is a dreadful fire. O, what creature can ſtand before it! as Aſaph ſpeaks, Pſalm lxxvi. 7. "Thou, even thou art to be feared; and "who may ſtand in thy ſight, when once thou art angry?"

*Conſid.* 3. Conſider, that all this while thou ſinneſt againſt knowledge and conviction; for did not thy conſcience plainly convince thee, when eminent danger opened its mouth, that the matter of thy neglected vow was a moſt neceſſary duty? If not, why didſt thou bind thy ſoul to forſake ſuch practices, and to perform ſuch duties? Thou didſt ſo look upon them then; by which it appears thy conſcience is convinced of thy duty, but luſt doth maſter and over-

rule: and if ſo, poor ſinner, what a caſe art thou in, to go on from day to day ſinning againſt light and knowledge? Is not this a fearful way of ſinning? and will not ſuch ſinners be plunged deeper into hell than the poor Indians, that never ſaw the evil of their ways, as thou doſt? Ponder but two or three ſcriptures in thy thoughts, and ſee what a dreadful way of ſinning this is: Rom. ii. 9. "Tribulation, anguiſh, and wrath, to every ſoul of man that doth evil, to "the [Jew firſt], and alſo to the Gentile" To the Jew firſt, i. e. to the Jew eſpecially and principally; he had a precedency in means and light, and ſo let him have in puniſhment. So Jam. iv. 17. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin;" i. e. Sin with a witneſs, horrid ſin, that ſurpaſſes the deeds of the wicked. So Luke xii. 47. "And that ſervant that knew his Lord's "will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, "ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes." Which is a plain alluſion to the cuſtom of the Jews in puniſhing an offender, who being convicted, the judge was to ſee him bound faſt to a pillar, his clothes ſtript off, and an executioner with a ſcourge to beat him with ſo many ſtripes: but now thoſe ſtripes came but from the arm of a creature; theſe that the text ſpeaks of are ſet on by the omnipotent arm of God. Of the former there was a determinate number ſet down in their law, as forty ſtripes; and ſometimes they would remit one of that number too, in mercy to the offender, as you ſee in the example of Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 24. "Of the Jews I received forty ſtripes, ſave "one;" but in hell no mitigation at all, nor allay of mercy. The arm of his power ſupports the creature in its being; while the arm of his juſtice lays on eternally. Soul, conſider theſe things; do thou not perſiſt any longer then in ſuch a deſperate way of ſinning againſt the clear conviction of thine own conſcience, which in this caſe muſt needs give teſtimony againſt thee.

Well then, go to God with the words of David, Pſal. lxvi. 13, 14. and ſay unto him, "I will pay thee my vows which my lips "have uttered, and my tongue hath ſpoken when I was in trouble." Pay it, ſoul, and pay it ſpeedily unto God, elſe he will recover it by juſtice, and fetch it out of thy bones in hell. O trifle not any longer with God, and that in ſuch ſerious matters as theſe are?

And now I have done my endeavour to give your former mercies and promiſes a reſurrection in your conſciences. O that you would ſit down and pauſe a while upon theſe things, and then reflect upon the paſt mercies of your lives, and on what hath paſſed betwixt God and your ſouls in your former ſtraits and troubles? Let not theſe plain words work upon thy ſplean, and make thee ſay as the widow of Sarepta did to the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 18. "What have I "to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to call my "ſin to remembrance?" But rather let it work kindly on thy heart, and make thee ſay as David to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. "Bleſ-

« ſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to meet « me; and bleſſed be thy advice."

CAUTION V.

THE fifth and laſt danger I ſhall warn you of, is your contempt and ſlighting of death. Ah! how little a matter do many of you, at leaſt in words, make of it? It ſeems you have light reverential fear of this king of terrors, not only that you ſpeak ſlightly of it, but alſo becauſe you make no more preparations for it, and are no more ſenſible of your preſervations and deliverances from it. Indeed the heathen philoſophers did many of them profeſs a contempt of death upon the account of wiſdom and fortitude; and they were accounted the braveſt men that moſt deſpiſed and ſlighted it: But, alas, poor ſouls! they ſaw not their enemy againſt whom they fought, but ſkirmiſhed with their eyes ſhut; they ſaw indeed its pale face, but not its ſting and dart. There is alſo a lawful contempt of death. We freely grant that in two caſes a believer may contemn it. *Firſt*, When it is propounded to them a temptation on purpoſe to ſcare them from Chriſt and duty, then they ſhould ſlight it; as Rev. xii. 11. "They loved not their lives unto the death." *Secondly*, When the natural evil of death is ſet in competition with the enjoyment of God in glory, then a believer ſhould deſpiſe it, as Chriſt is ſaid to do, Heb. xii. 2. though his was a ſhameful death. But upon all other accounts and conſiderations, it is the height of ſtupidity and ſecurity to deſpiſe it.

Now, to the end that you might have right thoughts and apprehenſions of death, which may put you upon ſerious preparation for it; and that whenever your turn comes to conflict with this king of terrors, under whoſe hand the Pompeys, Cæſars, and Alexanders of the world, who have been the terrors of nations, have bowed down themſelves; I ſay, that when your turn and time comes, as the Lord only knows how ſoon it may be, you may eſcape the ſtroke of its dart and ſting, and taſte no other bitterneſs in death, than the natural evil of it: To this end I have drawn the following queſtions and anſwers, which, if you pleaſe, may be called *The Seaman's Catechiſm*. And, oh! that you might not dare to launch forth into the deeps, until you have ſeriouſly interrogated and examined your hearts upon thoſe particulars. Oh! that you would reſolve, before you go forth, to withdraw yourſelves a while from all clamours and diſtractions, and calmly and ſeriouſly catechiſe your ownſelves in this manner.

*Queſt.* 1. What may the iſſue of this voyage be?

*Anſ.* Death, Prov. xxvii. 1. « Boaſt not thyſelf of to-morrow, « for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth." Jam. iv. 13, 14. « Go to now, ye that ſay, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go in- « to ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy and ſell, and « get gain: whereas you know not what ſhall be on the morrow; « for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a

" little time, and then vaniſheth away."

*Queſt.* 2. What is death?

*Anſw.* Death is a ſeparation of ſoul and body until the reſurrection, 2 Cor. v. 1. " We know that if our earthly houſe of this taber- " nacle be diſſolved." Job xiv. 10, 11, 12. Read the words.

*Queſt.* 3. Is death to be deſpiſed and ſlighted if it be ſo?

*Anſw.* O no! it is one of the moſt weighty and ſerious things that ever a creature went about: ſo dreadful doth it appear to ſome, that the fear of it ſubjects them to bondage all their lives, Heb. ii. 15. " And to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time ſubject to bondage." And in ſcripture it is called, *The king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. Or the black prince, as ſome tranſlate. Never had any prince ſuch a title before. To ſome it hath been ſo terrible, that none might mention its name before them.

*Queſt.* 4. What makes it ſo terrible and affrighting to men?

*Anſw.* Several things concur to make it terrible to the moſt of men; as, *firſt*, Its harbingers and antecedents, which are ſtrong pains, conflicts, and agonies. *Secondly*, Its office and work it comes about, which is to transfer us into the other world. Hence, Rev. vi. 8. it is ſet forth by a *pale horſe*: an horſe for its uſe and office to carry you away from hence into the upper, or lower region of eternity; and a pale horſe, for its ghaſtlineſs and terror. *Thirdly*, But above all, it is terrible in regard of its conſequence; for it is the door of eternity, the parting point betwixt the preſent world and that to come; the utmoſt line and boundary of all temporal things. Hence, Heb. ix. 27. " It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment." Rev. vi. 8. " And I looked, and behold, a pale horſe, and his name " that ſat on him was Death, and hell followed him." Ah! it makes a ſudden and ſtrange alteration upon men's conditions, to be plucked out of houſe, and from among friends and honours, and ſo many delights, and hurried in a moment into the land of darkneſs, to be clothed with flames, and drink the pure wrath of the Almighty for ever. This is it that makes it terrible.

*Queſt.* 5. If death be ſo weighty a matter, am I prepared to die?

*Anſw.* I doubt not; I am afraid I want many things that are neceſſary to a due preparation for it.

*Queſt.* 6. What are thoſe things wherein a due preparation for death conſiſteth?

*Anſw.* Many things are neceſſary. *Firſt*, Special and ſaving union with Jeſus Chriſt. This is that which diſarms it of its ſting: " O " death, where is thy ſting? Thanks be to God who hath given [us] " the victory, through [our] Lord Jeſus Chriſt," 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57. So John xi. 26. " Whoſoever [liveth,] and [believeth] in me ſhall " never die." Whoſoever liveth, i. e. is quickened with a new ſpiritual life and principle, and ſo puts forth the principal act of that life, viz. faith, he ſhall never die, i. e. eternally. This hornet, death, ſhall never leave its ſting in his ſides. *Secondly*, To entertain

death comfortably, the evidence and knowledge of this union is neceſſary, 2 Cor. v. 1. "For we [know,] that if our earthly houſe of "this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God," &c. And then he cannot only be content, but groan to be unclothed, ver. 2. A miſtake in the former will coſt me my ſoul; and a miſtake here will loſe me my peace and comfort. *Thirdly*, In order to this evidence, it is neceſſary that I keep a good conſcience in all things both towards God and man, 2 Cor. i. 12. "This is our rejoicing, "even the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly "ſincerity, not in fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have "had our converſation in the world." This good conſcience reſpects all and every part of our work and duty to be done, and all and every ſin to be renounced and denied: ſo that he that is early united unto Chriſt by faith, hath the clear evidence of that union; and the evidence fairly gathered from the teſtimony of a good conſcience, witneſſing his faithfulneſs, as to all duties to be done, and ſins to be avoided, he is fit to die; death can do him no harm; but, alas! theſe things are not to be found in me.

*Queſt.* 7. But what if I die without ſuch a preparation as this is? What will the conſequence of that be?

*Anſw.* Very terrible, even the ſeparation of my ſoul and body from the Lord to all eternity; John iii. 36. "He that believeth "on the Son hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the "Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." *He ſhall not ſee life*; there is the privative part of his miſery, ſeparation from the bleſſed God. *And the* [*wrath*], mark it, not anger, but wrath, not the wrath of man, but of [God], at whoſe rebukes the mountains ſkip like frighted men, and the hills tremble: the wrath of God not only flaſhes out upon him, as a tranſient flaſh of lightning, but [*abideth*], dwells, ſticks faſt; there is no power in the world can looſe the ſoul from it. [*Upon him*], not the body only, nor the ſoul only, but on [*him*], *(i. e.)* the whole perſon, the whole man. Here is the principal poſitive part of that man's miſery.

*Queſt.* 8. Can I bear this miſery?

*Anſw.* No: my heart cannot endure, nor my hands be ſtrong, when God ſhall have to do with me upon this account. I cannot bear his wrath; angels could not bear it; it hath ſunk them into the depths of miſery. Thoſe that feel but a few ſparks of it in their conſciences here, are even diſtracted by it, Pſalm lxxxviii. 15. Chriſt himſelf had never borne up under it, had it not been ſupported by the infinite power of the divine nature, Iſa. xlii. 1. "Behold my Ser-"vant whom I uphold." How then ſhall I live, when God doth this? what will be done to the dry tree? Oh! there is no abiding of it, it is inſufferable! "The ſinners in Zion are afraid; trembling "ſurprizeth the hypocrite: who among us ſhall dwell with the de-"vouring fire? Who can endure the everlaſting burning?" Iſa. xxxiii. 14.

*Queſt.* 9. If it cannot be borne, is there any way to prevent it?

*Anſw.* Yes, there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing. And herein I am in better caſe than the damned; I have the [*may be's*] of mercy, and they have not. Oh! what would they give for a poſſibility of ſalvation? Iſa. i. 16, 17, 18. "Waſh ye, make you clean, "put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to "do evil, learn to do well," *&c.* "Come now, let us reaſon together: and though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as ſnow." Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will "have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly "pardon." Though my diſeaſe be dangerous, it is not deſperate, it doth not ſcorn a remedy. Oh! there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there. There is yet a poſſibility, not only of recovering my primitive glory, but to be ſet in a better caſe than ever Adam was.

*Queſt.* 10. How may that be?

*Anſw.* By going to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. viii. 1. "There "is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus." Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who ſhall lay any thing to the "charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth, Who is he that "condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather, that is riſen "again.

*Queſt.* 11. But what is it to go to Chriſt?

*Anſw.* To go to Chriſt, is to * embrace him in his † perſon and ‡ offices, and to reſt § entirely and cloſely upon him for ‖ pardon of ſin, and ** eternal life: being deeply †† ſenſible of the want and worth of him. John i. 12. "To as many as [received] him, he gave "power to become the ſons of God, even to as many as believed "on his name." John iii. 36. "He that believeth [on the Son] "hath life." 1 Cor. i. 30. "And of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, "who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification "and redemption." Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there ſalvation in "any other," *&c.* Acts xiii. 39. "And by him all that believe are "[juſtified from all things,] from which ye could not be juſtified by "the law of Moſes." Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me and be ye "ſaved." Acts ii. 37. "Now when they heard this they were "pricked to the heart," *&c.*

*Queſt.* 12. But will Chriſt receive me, if I go to him?

*Anſw.* Yes, yes; he is more ready to receive thee, than thou art to come to him; Luke xv. 20. "And he aroſe, and came to his father: but, when he was yet a great way off, his father ſaw him, "and had compaſſion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and "kiſſed him." The ſon doth but go, the father ran; if he had but received him into the houſe, it had been much; but he fell on his

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* John i. 12. † John iii. 36. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30. § Acts iv. 12.
‖ Acts xiii. 39. ** Iſa. xlv. 22. †† Acts. *ii.* 37.

neck, and kiſſed him. He beſpeaks him, much after that rate he expreſſed himſelf to returning Ephraim: "My bowels are troubled "for him; I will ſurely have mercy on him," Jer. xxxi. 20. There is not the leaſt parentheſis in all the pages of free-grace, to exclude a ſoul that is ſincerely willing to come to Chriſt.

*Queſt.* 13. But how may it appear that he is willing to receive me?

*Anſw.* Make trial of him thyſelf. If thou didſt but know his heart to poor ſinners, you would not queſtion it. Believe what he ſaith in the goſpel; there thou ſhalt find that he is a willing Saviour; for therein thou haſt, firſt, his moſt ſerious invitations, Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden." Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters." Theſe ſerious invitations are, ſecondly, backed and confirmed with his oath, Ezek. xxxv. 11. "As I live, I deſire not the death of a ſinner." Thirdly, Amplified with pathetical wiſhes, ſighs and groans, Luke xix. 42. "Oh! that thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt, in this "thy day." Fourthly, Yea, delivered unto them in undiſſembled tears, Mat. xxiii. 37. 38. "He wept over it, and ſaid, O Jeruſalem, "Jeruſalem!" Fifthly, Nay, he hath ſhed not only tears, but blood, to convince thee of his willingneſs. View him in his dying poſture upon the croſs, ſtretching out his dying arms to gather thee, hanging down his bleſſed head to kiſs thee; every one of his wounds was a mouth opened to convince thee of the abundant willingneſs of Chriſt to receive thee.

*Queſt.* 14. But my ſins are dyed in grain; I am a ſinner of the blackeſt hue: will he receive and pardon ſuch an one?

*Anſw.* Yea, ſoul, if thou be willing to commit thyſelf to him: Iſa. i. 18. "Come now, let us reaſon together; though your ſins be as "ſcarlet, I will make them as ſnow; though they be red like crim-"ſon, I will make them as wool."

*Queſt.* 15. This is comfortable news; but may I not delay my cloſing with him for a while, and yet not hazard my eternal happineſs, ſeeing I reſolve to come to him at laſt?

*Anſw.* No; there muſt be no delays in this caſe; Pſalm cxix. 60. "I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."

*Queſt.* 16. Why may I not defer it, at leaſt for a little while?

*Anſw.* For many weighty reaſons this work can bear no delays. Firſt, The offers of grace are made to the preſent time, Heb. iii. 15. "Whilſt it is ſaid to-day, harden not your heart." There may be a few more days of God's patience, but that is unknown to thee. 2. Your life is immediate uncertain; how many thouſands are gone into eternity ſince the laſt night? If you can ſay to ſickneſs when it comes, Go, and come again another time, it were ſomewhat. 3. Sin is not a thing to be dallied with. Oh, who would be willing to lie down one night under the guilt of all his ſins? 4. Delays increaſe the difficulty of converſion: ſin ſtill roots itſelf deeper; habits

are the more ſtrengthened, and the heart ſtill more hardened. 5. There be thouſands now in hell, that periſhed through delays; their conſciences often urged and preſſed hard upon them, and many reſolutions they had, as thou haſt now; but they were never perfected by anſwerable executions, and ſo they periſhed. 6. Thy way of ſinning now is deſperate; for every moment thou art acting againſt clear light and conviction; and that is a dreadful way of ſinning. 7. There can be no ſolid reaſon for one hour's delay; for thou canſt not be happy too ſoon: and be ſure of it, if ever thou come to taſte of the ſweetneſs of a Chriſtian life, nothing will more pierce and grieve thee than this, that thou enjoyedſt it no ſooner.

*Queſt.* 17. Oh, but the pleaſures of ſin engage me to it; how ſhall I break theſe cords and ſnares?

*Anſw.* That ſnare may be broken by conſidering ſolemnly theſe five things. 1. That to take pleaſure in ſin, is an argument of a moſt deplorable and wretched ſtate of ſoul. What a poiſonous nature doth it argue in a toad, that is ſucking in nothing but poiſon and filth where-ever it crawls! O what an heart haſt thou! Haſt thou nothing to find pleaſure in but that which makes the Spirit of Chriſt ſad, and the hearts of ſaints ake and groan, which digged hell, and let in endleſs miſeries upon the world? 2. Think that the miſery it involves thee in is infinitely beyond the delights it tempts thee by: it doth but delight the ſenſual part, and that but with a brutiſh pleaſure, but will torment thy immortal ſoul, and that for ever. The pleaſure will quickly go off, but the ſting will remain behind. "I taſted but a little honey on the top of my rod, (ſaid "Jonathan) and I muſt die," 1 Sam. xiv. 43. 3. Nay, that is not all; but the Lord proportions wrath according to the pleaſures ſouls have had in ſin, Rev. xviii. 7. "How much ſhe hath lived deliciouſ-"ly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give unto her." 4. What doſt thou pay, or at leaſt pawn for this pleaſure? Thy ſoul, thy precious ſoul is laid to ſtake for it; and, in effect, thus thou ſayeſt when thou deferreſt the cloſing with Chriſt upon the account of enjoying the pleaſures of ſin a little longer: Here, devil, take my ſoul into thy poſſeſſion and power: if I repent I will have it again; if not, it is thine for ever. O dear-bought pleaſures!

What is the world? A great exchange of ware,
Wherein all ſorts and ſexes cheapning are;
The fleſh the devil ſit and cry—what lack ye?
When moſt they fawn, they moſt intend to rack ye:
The wares are cups of joy and beds of pleaſure;
There's godly choice, down weight, and flowing meaſure.
A ſoul's the price, but they give time to pay,
Upon the death-bed, or the dying-day.
Hard is the bargain, and unjuſt the meaſure,
When as the price ſo much out-laſts the pleaſure.

QUARLES.

*Laſtly*, It is thy groſs miſtake to think thou ſhalt be bereaved of all delights and pleaſures by coming under the government of Chriſt: for one of thoſe things in which his kingdom conſiſts, is joy in the Holy Ghoſt, Rom. xiv. 17. Indeed it allows no ſinful pleaſures to the ſubjects of it, nor do they need it; but from the day thou cloſeſt in with Chriſt, all thy pure, real, and eternal pleaſures and delights begin to bear date. When the prodigal was returned to his father, then, ſaith the text, "They began to be merry," Luke xv. 24. See Acts viii. 5, 6. No, ſoul, thou ſhalt want no joy, for the ſcripture ſaith, "They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of "thy houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy "pleaſures; for with thee is the fountain of life," &c. Pſal. xxxvi. 8, 9.

*Queſt.* 18. But how ſhall I be able to undergo the ſeverities of religion? There are difficult duties to be done, and an heavy croſs to be taken up; theſe be the things that daunt me.

*Anſw.* If pain and ſuffering daunt thee, how is it thou art not more out of love with ſin than with religion? For it is moſt certain, that the ſufferings for Chriſt are nothing to hell, the juſt reward and certain iſſue of ſin; the pains of mortification are nothing to the pains of damnation: there is no compariſon betwixt ſuffering for Chriſt, and ſuffering from Chriſt; Matth. v. 29 "If thy right hand or eye of-"fend thee, cut it off, and pluck it out; it is profitable for thee that "one member ſuffer, than that the whole body be caſt into hell." Secondly, Thou ſeeſt the worſt, but not the beſt of Chriſt. There be joys and comforts in thoſe difficult duties and ſufferings, that thou ſeeſt not; Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my ſufferings." James i. 2. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers tempta-"tions," &c. Thirdly, Great ſhall be thy aſſiſtance from Chriſt, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through him that ſtrengthens me. "The Spirit helps our infirmities," takes the other end of the burden, Rom. viii. 26. What meaneſt thou to ſtand upon ſuch terms, when it is heaven or hell, eternal life or death that lie before thee?

*Queſt.* 19. But to what purpoſe will my endeavours to come to Chriſt be, unleſs I be elected? All will be to no purpoſe.

*Anſw.* True; If thou be not elected, thou canſt not obtain him, or happineſs by him: but yet that is no diſcouragement to ſtrive: for in thy unconverted ſtate, thy election or non-election is a ſecret to thee: the only way to make it ſure is by ſtriving and giving all diligence in the way of duty, 2 Pet. i. 10. And if you ponder the text well, you will find, that election is not only made ſure in the way of diligence and ſtriving, but calling is put before it, and lies in order to it: firſt ſecure thy effectual calling, and then thine election.

*Queſt.* 20. But I have no ſtrength of my own to come to Chriſt by: and is it not abſurd to urge me upon impoſſibilities in order to my ſalvation?

*Anſw.* Firſt, Certainly you are moſt abſurd in pleading and pretending your impotence againſt your duty; for you do think you have a power to come to Chriſt, elſe how do you quiet your conſcience with promiſes and reſolves of converſion hereafter? Secondly, Though it be true, that no ſaving act can be done without the concurrence of ſpecial grace; yet this is as true, that thy inability to do what is above thy power, doth not excuſe thee from doing what is in thy power to do. Canſt thou not forbear, at leaſt, many external acts of ſin? And canſt thou not perform, at leaſt, the external acts of duty? Oh! if thou canſt not come to Chriſt, yet, as the blind man, lie in the way of Chriſt: do what thou canſt do, and confeſs and bewail thy impotency, that thou canſt do no more. Canſt thou not take thy ſoul aſide in ſecret, and thus bemoan it; my poor ſoul! what wilt thou do? O what will become of thee, thou art chriſtleſs, covenantleſs, hopeleſs, and, which is moſt ſad, ſenſeleſs and bowelleſs? oh! thou canſt not bear the infinite wrath of the eternal God, whoſe Almighty power will be ſet on work to torment ſuch as thou art; and yet thou takeſt no courſe to prevent it! Thou ſeeſt the buſy diligence of all others, and how the kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence by them: and art not thou as deeply engaged to look to thy own happineſs as any in the world? Will hell be more tolerable to thee than others? O what a compoſition of ſtupidity and ſloth art thou: Thou liveſt after ſuch a rate, as if there were neither fire in hell to torment thee, nor glory in heaven to reward thee. If God and Chriſt, heaven and hell, were but dreams and fables, thou couldſt not be leſs affected with them. Ah, my ſoul! my ſoul! my precious ſoul! Is it eaſy to periſh? Wilt thou die as a fool dieth? O that men would but do this if they can do no more!

And now, ſoul, you ſee what death that is you have made ſo light of; and what is the only way that we poor ſons of death have to eſcape its ſting. You have here ſeen the vanity of all your pleas and pretences againſt converſion, and the way to Chriſt prepared and caſt up for you. Now ſirs, I beg you, in the name of God that made you, and as if I made this requeſt upon my bended knees to you, that you will now, without any more delays, yield yourſelves to the Lord. Soul, I beſeech thee, haſte thee into thy chamber, ſhut thy door, and beſpeak the Lord after ſome ſuch manner as this before thou dareſt to launch out into the deeps again.

O dreadful and glorious Majeſty! thou haſt bowels of mercy, as well as beams of glory: I have heard the ſounding of theſe bowels for me this day. Lord, I have now heard a repreſentation of the grim and ghaſtly face of death: ah, I have now ſeen it as the king of terrors, as the door of eternity, as the parting point where ſinners take their eternal farewel of all their delights: I have ſeen this black prince mounted on his pale horſe, and hell following him: I have been convinced this day, that if he ſhould come and fetch away my ſoul in that condition it is, hell would follow him indeed.

Lord, I have now heard of the Prince of life alſo, in whoſe bleeding ſide death hath left and loſt its envenomed ſting; ſo that though it may kill, yet it cannot hurt any of his members. To this glorious Redeemer I have now been invited; all my pretences againſt him have been confuted, and my ſoul, in his name, aſſured of welcome, if I come unto him, and caſt myſelf upon him. And now, Lord, I come, I come, upon thy call and invitation; I am unfeignedly willing to avouch thee this day to be my God, and to take thee for my portion. Lord Jeſus! I come unto thee; thy clay, thy creature moves towards the Fountain of pity: look hitherto, behold a ſpectacle of miſery. Bowels of mercy, hear! behold my naked ſoul, not a rag of righteouſneſs to cover it; behold my ſtarving ſoul, not a bit of bread for it to eat: ah! it has fed upon wind and vanity hitherto. Behold my wounded ſoul bleeding at thy foot; every part, head and heart, will and affections, all wounded by ſin. O thou compaſſionate Samaritan! turn aſide, and pour thy ſovereign blood into theſe bleeding wounds, which, like ſo many opened mouths, plead for pity. Behold a returning, ſubmitting rebel, willing to lay down the weapons of unrighteouſneſs, and to come upon the knee for a pardon. Oh, I am weary of the ſervice of ſin, I can endure it no longer! Lord Jeſus, thou waſt anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, and to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound; come now, and knock off thoſe fetters of unbelief: O ſet my ſoul at liberty that it may praiſe thee! For ſo many years Satan hath cruelly tyrannized over me. O that this might be the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of the ſalvation of my God! Lord, thou waſt lifted up to draw men unto thee; and indeed thou art a drawing Saviour, a lovely Jeſus! I have hitherto ſlighted thee, but it was becauſe I did not know thee: mine eyes have been held by unbelief, when thou waſt opened in the goſpel; but now I ſee thee as the chiefeſt of ten thouſands. Thou art the glory of heaven, the glory of earth, the glory of Sion; and, oh! that thou wouldſt be the glory of my ſoul! I confeſs I am not worthy thou ſhouldſt look upon me; I may much rather expect to be trampled under the feet of juſtice, than to be embraced in thine arms of mercy: and that thou ſhouldſt rather ſhed my polluted blood, than ſprinkle thine own upon me. But, Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Wilt thou purſue a dried leaf; Shall it ever be ſaid that the merciful King of heaven hanged up a poor ſoul that put the rope about his own neck, and ſo came ſelf-condemningly to him for mercy! O, my Lord, I am willing to ſubmit to any terms, be they never ſo hard and ungrateful to the fleſh: I am ſure whatever I ſhall ſuffer in thy ſervice cannot be like to what I have ſuffered, or am like to ſuffer by ſin; henceforth be thou my Lord and Maſter; thy ſervice is perfect freedom; be thou my prieſt and prophet, my wiſdom and righteouſneſs. I reſign up myſelf unto thee; my poor ſoul with all its faculties, my body with all its members, to be living inſtruments

of thy glory. Let *holineſs to the Lord* be now written upon them all, let my tongue henceforth plead for thee, my hands be lifted up unto thy teſtimonies, my feet walk in thy ways: O let all my affections, as willing ſervants, wait upon thee, and be active for thee. Whatever I am, let me be for thee; whatever I have, let it be thine; whatever I can do, let me do for thee; whatever I can ſuffer, let me ſuffer for thee. O that I might ſay, before I go hence, my beloved is mine, and I am his! O that what I have begged on earth might be ratified in heaven! my ſpirit within me ſaith, *Amen.* Lord Jeſus, ſay thou, *Amen.*

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THE

# SEAMAN's COMPANION:

Wherein the Myſteries of Providence, relating to SEAMEN, are opened; their Sins and Dangers diſcovered; their Duties preſſed, and their ſeveral Troubles and Burden's relieved.

In ſix practicable and ſuitable SERMONS.

*To all Maſters, Mariners, and Seamen; eſpecially ſuch as belong to the Port of Dartmouth, and the Parts adjacent.*

SIRS,

YOUR ready acceptation of my former labours for you, hath encouraged this ſecond and laſt endeavour of mine this way to ſerve you. I have for many years been convinced of the great uſe and need you have of the following diſcourſes: But the motives that quickened me to their publication at this time, were eſpecially theſe two:

*Firſt,* The hand of the Lord hath gone forth with terror againſt you; this winter many of your companions are gone down to the bottom. Such a doleful account of ſhipwrecks from every coaſt, and ſuch ſad lamentations as have been heard in almoſt every maritime town, cannot but deeply affect every heart with ſorrow and compaſſion, and hath engaged me in this ſervice for the remnant that is left.

*Secondly,* The ſeaſonable and prudent care his Majeſty hath at this time manifeſted for the regulation and preſervation of your Newland trade, and encouragement of your honeſt induſtry therein, hath alſo provoked me to haſten this deſign, for the regulation of your lives and manners, without which all external means will ſignify but little to your true proſperity.

This little manual contains the ſum of your duty in the ſeveral parts

of your employments, and faithfully diſcovers the temptations and dangers attending you in them all. Upon which conſideration it is fitly entitled, *The Seaman's Companion.*

As God hath caſt my lot among you, ſo he hath inclined my heart ſtudiouſly to promote your welfare. I have been, by long obſervation, convinced, that one principal cauſe of your miſcarriages, is the neglect of God in your outſets. Did you pray more, you might expect to proſper better. Indeed, if that Epicurean doctrine were true, that God concerns not himſelf about the affairs of this lower world, but leaves all things to be ſwayed by the power of natural cauſes, your neglect of prayer might be more excuſeable: But, whilſt ſucceſſes and diſappointments depend upon his pleaſure, it cannot but be the moſt direct courſe you can ſteer to ruin all, to forget and neglect God in your enterprizes. To cure this evil, and prevent the manifold miſchiefs that follow it, the firſt ſermon is deſigned. And if the Lord ſhall bleſs it to your conviction and reformation, I may then comfortably apply the words of Moſes to you, Deut. xxxiii. 18. "Re-"joice, Zebulun, in thy going out."

You often hear the terrible voice of God in the ſtorms; and are at your wit's end, not knowing what courſe to take, nor which way to turn for ſafety and comfort: And yet how ſoon are all thoſe impreſſions worn off? and thoſe mercies which (whilſt new) were ſo affecting, after a few days become ſtale and common. I have, therefore, in the ſecond ſermon, laboured not only to direct and ſupport you in thoſe ſtraits, but have alſo endeavoured to fix the ſenſe of thoſe providences upon your hearts, and inſtruct you how to make due improvements of them, by anſwering the ſeveral aims and deſigns of them.

It hath been much upon my heart, to what and how many temptations to ſin you are expoſed in foreign countries, where lawful remedies are abſent, alluring objects preſent, and temptations exceedingly ſtrengthened upon you, by hopes of ſecrecy and concealment: And, indeed, for a man whoſe heart is not thoroughly ſeaſoned with religion, and awed by the fear of God, to converſe in ſuch places, and with ſuch company, and not be polluted with their ſins, is, upon the matter, as great a miracle, as for the three children to come out of the fiery furnace without an hair ſinged, or the ſmell of fire upon their garments. I have therefore prepared for you the beſt preſervative from theſe temptations in the third ſermon, which the Lord make an effectual antidote to your ſouls againſt the corruptions that are in the world through luſt.

I have frequently obſerved the miſchievous influence that ſucceſs and proſperity have had upon ſome of you: How the God of your mercies hath been forgotten, and his mercies made inſtruments of ſin againſt him: How apt are men to aſcribe all to their own wiſdom, care and induſtry, as if God had no hand in it? The *fourth ſermon* therefore leads up your thoughts to the fountain of all your good, and

drops many very ſeaſonable and neceſſary cautions upon you, to keep you humble and thankful under proſperity.

And becauſe men will not own God in their ſucceſs, but ſacrifice to their own net; God often teaches them the evil of it, by ſad loſſes and diſappointments: Yea, diſappointments ſometimes follow the beſt of men, and that in the moſt juſt and honeſt employments. To caution the former ſort, and ſupport the latter, in ſuch a caſe, I recommend the *fifth ſermon* to your ſerious conſideration, not doubting, if the bleſſing of God go forth with it, but it may prove a very ſeaſonable and uſeful diſcourſe to you in that condition.

And, laſtly, becauſe it is ſo common for ſeamen to forget the many mercies they have received in a voyage, when it is over, and God hath brought them to the havens of deſire, and among their relations, I have, in the *laſt ſermon*, inſtructed them in their duty, and laboured to work in ſuch a ſenſe of mercies upon their hearts, as may engage them to a due and thankful acknowledgment of God in all.

You ſee, by this brief account, how honeſt the deſign is in which I have engaged for you. But I am ſenſible, that the management is very defective, it being diſpatched in haſte, and when my hands were filled with other work, and my body clogged with many infirmities. But, ſuch as it is, I heartily devote it to the ſpecial ſervice of your ſouls, and remain

*Yours, in all Chriſtian ſervice,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

DARTMOUTH, Jan. 21, 1675.

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THE

# SEAMAN's FAREWEL.

## SERMON I.

Acts xxi. 5, 6. *And we kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed; and when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ſhip, and they returned home again.*

THIS ſcripture gives us an account of the manner of Paul's embarking at Tyre, in his voyage for Jeruſalem; and therein an excellent pattern for all that go down into the ſeas, to do buſineſs in the great waters. It is true, his buſineſs, in that voyage, was not to get an eſtate, but to witneſs to the truths of Jeſus Chriſt with the

hazard of his life. Many diſcouragements he met with in this voyage, and not the leaſt at Tyre, where he met with certain diſciples that ſaid to him, by the Spirit, that he ſhould not go to Jeruſalem, though, in that, they followed their own ſpirit; but he is not to be diſſuaded: Like that noble Roman *, and upon a more noble account, 'he judged it neceſſary to go, but not to live.' The diſciples ſeeing his unalterable reſolution, expreſs their affections to him at parting, by bringing him to the ſhip, and that with their whole families, wives and children, ver. 5. therein giving him the laſt mark of their dear reſpects.

In the farewel, their Chriſtian affections are mutually manifeſted by two ſorts of actions,—*viz.* *Sacred* and *Civil*—in prayers and ſalutations.

1. Prayers; the beſt office one chriſtian can do to another. As prayer is the beſt preface, ſo certainly it is the beſt cloſe to any buſineſs or enjoyment: In which prayer we may note the place, poſture, and matter or ſcope.

*Firſt.* The place; it was upon the *ſhore*, the parting place near to which the ſhip rode, waiting for Paul: And this was no unuſual thing among them in thoſe days Tertullian † tells us, "they ſent their prayers to heaven from every ſhore;" and elſewhere, he calls them, *orationes littorales*, "ſhore prayers." So cuſtomary it was for holy men, in thoſe days, to be taken into the ſhip or boat from their knees, not from the tavern or ale-houſe.

*Secondly*, The poſture; "they kneeled down." As all places, ſo all poſtures have been uſed in prayer. Some have uſed one poſture, and ſome another; but this is the common and ordinary poſture: Knees when they can (as an ingenious author ſpeaks) then they muſt be bowed.

*Thirdly*, The matter and ſcope of the prayer, which though it be not expreſſed, yet may with great probability be argued from the place and occaſion, to be, as Eraſmus ſpeaks *Pro fauſta Navigatione*, for a proſperous voyage, and divine protection. He knew to what, and how many hazards of life they are hourly expoſed, that border ſo near unto death, as mariners and paſſengers at ſea do; and therefore would not commit himſelf to the ſea, until firſt he had ſolemnly committed himſelf to God, whoſe voice the winds and ſeas obey: Nor was he willing to take his leave of his friends, until he had poured out his heart to God with them, and for them, whoſe faces he might never ſee again in this world, and engaged their prayers alſo for him.

2. As their affections were mutually manifeſted by this *ſacred* action, *prayer*; ſo by *civil* ones too, affectionate embraces and *ſalutations*. "When we had taken our leave one of another." Salutations were

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* *Neceſſe eſt ut eam, non ut vivam.* Cæſar.

† *Per omne littus preces ad cælum mittunt.* Tertul. de Jejun.

uſed among the Jews, both at their meeting and parting. This latter conſiſted in words and geſtures; the uſual words were, "The "Lord bleſs you," Ruth ii. 4. "Peace be unto thee. Grace be "with you," *&c.* The geſtures were kiſſing each other. Theſe were kiſſes which a Cato might give, and a Veſtal receive. In both theſe, *viz.* their prayers for, and ſalutations of, each other, they manifeſted their Chriſtian affections mutually, but eſpecially by their prayers at parting. Hence note,

Doct. *Thoſe that undertake voyages by ſea, had need not only to pray earneſtly themſelves, but alſo to engage the prayers of other Chriſtians for them.*

They that part praying, may hope to meet again rejoicing; and thoſe deſigns which are not prefaced with prayer, cannot wind up with a bleſſing. There are two ſorts of prayer, *ſtated* and *occaſional.*

*Stated* prayer is our converſing with God, either publicly, privately, or ſeretely, at the conſtant ſeaſons allotted for it, in the returns of every week and day.

*Occaſional*, is the Chriſtian's addreſs to God at any time upon extraordinary emergencies, and calls of providence; or, when we undertake any ſolemn buſineſs, (and what more ſolemn than this?) and then the chief matter and ſcope of prayer is to be ſuited to the preſent occaſion and deſign in hand; of this ſort is that I am here to ſpeak. Now in opening the point, I will ſhew,

(1.) What thoſe ſpecial mercies are that ſeamen ſhould pray for, when they are to undertake a voyage.

(2.) What influence prayer hath upon thoſe mercies, and how it muſt be qualified for that end.

(3.) What aid and aſſiſtance the prayers of other Chriſtians may contribute to the procurement of them.

And then make application of all.

(1.) We will inform the ſeaman, what thoſe ſpecial mercies are, he ſhould earneſtly pray for, when he undertakes a voyage.

And amongſt thoſe mercies to be earneſtly requeſted of God by him, the firſt and principal is, *the pardon of ſin;* a mercy which muſt make a part of every prayer, and at this time to be earneſtly ſued for. Guilt is that Jonah in the ſhip, for whoſe ſake ſtorms, ſhipwrecks, and ruin purſue it. It is ſaid, Pſalm cxlviii. 8. "That "the ſtormy winds fulfil God's word." If the word there ſpoken of be the word of God's threatening againſt ſin, as ſome expound it, then the ſtormy winds and lofty waves, are God's *ſerjeants* ſent out with commiſſion to arreſt ſinners upon the ſea, his waterbailiffs to execute the threatenings of God upon them, in the great deeps. Hence thoſe expreſſions of ſcripture, Numb. xxxii. 23 "Be ſure your ſin will find you out;" and Gen. iv. 7. "Sin lieth at the door." In both which places, the Spirit of God compares a man's guilt to a blood-hound, that purſues and

follows upon the ſcent wherever a man goes. And indeed our ſins are called *debts*, Matth. vi. 12. Not that we owe them to God, or ought to ſin againſt him; but *metonymically*, becauſe as pecuniary debts oblige him to ſuffer that hath not wherewith to pay, and expoſe him to the danger of ſerjeants and bailiffs wherever he ſhall be found; ſo do our ſins, in reference to God, who hath reckoned with many thouſands of ſinners upon the ſea, there arreſted them by his winds and waves which he ſent out after them, and laid their bodies in the bottom of the ſea, and their ſouls in the bottom of hell. Oh! that is a diſmal ſtorm, that is ſent after a man, to drive ſoul and body to deſtruction! with what heart or courage can that man go down into the deeps, and expoſe himſelf among the raging waves and roaring winds, that knows God hath a controverſy with him; and for ought he knows, the next ſtorm may be ſent to hurry him to the judgment-ſeat of the great and terrible God? Certainly, friends, it is your great concern to get a pardon, and be at peace with God; a thing ſo indiſpenſable, that you cannot have leſs; and ſo comprehenſive, that you cannot deſire more. If ſin be pardoned, you are ſafe, you need fear no ſtorms within, whatever you find without: But woe to him that finds at once a raging ſea, and a roaring conſcience; trouble without, and terror within; ſhip and hope ſinking together. You are privy to all the evils and wickedneſs of your hearts and lives. You know what treaſures of guilt you have been heaping up all your days; and think you when diſtreſſes and extremities come upon you, conſcience will be as quiet and ſtill as it is now? No, no, guilt will fly in your faces then, and ſtop your mouths. O therefore humble yourſelves at the feet of God for all your iniquities; apply yourſelves to the blood of ſprinkling; pray and plead with God for remiſſion of ſin; without which you are in a woeful caſe to adventure yourſelves at ſea to thoſe eminent perils of life.

(2.) Another mercy you are earneſtly to pray for is, That the *preſence* of God may go with you, I mean not his *general preſence*, which fills the world; that will be with you, whether you pray for it or no; but his *gracious ſpecial preſence*, which was that Moſes ſo earneſtly ſued for in Exod. xxxiii. 15. "If thy preſence go not with me, carry us not hence." He and the people were now in a waſte howling wilderneſs, but bound for Canaan, that earthly paradiſe; yet you ſee he chuſes rather to be in a *wilderneſs* with God, than in a Canaan without him; and no wonder, for this gracious preſence of God, as to *comfort*, is all that a gracious ſoul hath, or deſires to have in this world; and as to ſecurity and protection from dangers, it is the only *aſſylum*, ſanctuary, and refuge in the day of trouble. If the preſence of God be graciouſly with us, it will guard the heart againſt terror in the moſt imminent diſtreſs, as you ſee, Pſal. xxiii. 4. "Yea, though

" I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death* i. e. (through " the moſt apparent and imminent dangers of death), " yet will I " fear no evil, for thou art with me." And indeed there is no room for fear; for with whomſoever God is in a gracious and ſpecial manner preſent, theſe three matchleſs mercies are ſecured to that man.

*Firſt*, That God's ſpecial providence ſhall watch over him in all dangers, Pſalm xci. 1,—4. " He ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the " Almighty; he ſhall cover thee with his feathers, and under his " wings ſhalt thou truſt." As the hen gathers her brood under her wings, not only to cheriſh, but to defend them from all danger, ſo God takes his people under his providential wings for their ſecurity.

*Secondly*, He appoints for them a guard of angels, whoſe office is to watch over, and miniſter to them in all their ſtraits. So we read, Pſal. xci. 11. " He ſhall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." Many inviſible ſervices they do for us. Luther tells us the angels have two offices,—*Superius canere, et inferius vigilare*;—to ſing above, and watch below. Theſe are as a life-guard to that man with whom the Lord is.

*Thirdly*, He readily hears their cries in a day of diſtreſs, and is with them to ſave and deliver them. So ver. 15. " He ſhall call upon " me, and I will anſwer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him." O what a matchleſs mercy is this! how many times, when poor ſeamen have ſeen death apparently before their eyes, have they cried, *mercy! mercy!* How ordinary is it for their eyes, on ſuch occaſions, to add ſalt-water, where alas, there was too much before? But now to have God with you in ſuch an hour of ſtraits, to hear, ſupport, and deliver you: O you cannot eſtimate the worth of ſuch a mercy! Pray therefore, for it is a mercy indiſpenſably neceſſary for you; and ſay to him, as Moſes, " Lord, if thy preſence may not go with us, carry us not hence."

(3.) A third mercy you are ſpecially concerned to beg of God, is, that you may be kept from the temptations to ſin you will meet with when you are abroad in the world. The whole world lies in wickedneſs, 1 John v. 19. Every place, every employment, every company hath its ſnares and temptations attending it: And you know you have corrupt natures, as much diſpoſed to cloſe with temptations as tinder is to catch fire: So that unleſs the preventing reſtraining, and mortifying grace of God be with you, they will but touch and take. If there were no devil to tempt you externally; yet ſuch a corrupt heart meeting with a ſuitable temptation and occaſion, is enough to overcome you; Jam. i. 14. " Every man is tempted when he is drawn " away of his own luſts, and enticed." Alas! you know not what hearts you have till temptations prove them; and what comfort can you take in the ſucceſs and proſperity of your affairs, be it never ſo great, if you return with conſciences polluted and wounded with ſin.

* *Quamvis in ſumma mortis ipſius pericula incurram.* Gloſſ. Philol. Sacr.

He that brings home a pack of fine clothes, infected with the plague, hath no ſuch great bargain of it, how cheap ſoever he purchaſed them. O therefore beg earneſtly of God that you may be kept from ſin; pray that you be not led into temptation.

(4.) Pray for *divine protection* in all the dangers and hazards to which you ſhall be expoſed. You know not how ſoon your life and eſtate ſhall be in jeopardy: This night you may ſleep quietly in your cabin, to-morrow you may be tugging at the pumb, and the next night take up your lodging upon a cold rock. How ſmartly doth the apoſtle James reprehend the ſecurity of trading perſons; Jam. iv. 13, 14. "Go to now, ye that ſay, to-day or to-morrow we will go into ſuch "a city, and continue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain; "whereas you know not what ſhall be on the morrow. For what is "your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, and "then vaniſheth away." How eaſily can God daſh all your deſigns, and hopeful projects in one hour! You know you are every moment as near death as you are near the water, which is but a remove of one or two inches. How poor a defence is the ſtrongeſt ſhip againſt the lofty ſeas and lurking rocks? How innumerable are the accidents and contingencies in a voyage, which the moſt ſkilful navigator cannot foreſee or prevent?

They are, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, at their wit's end, Pſalm cvii. 27. But O how ſecure and ſafe amidſt all dangers, is that man whom the Lord takes into his ſpecial protection? And he will not ſhut out thoſe that ſincerely commit themſelves to him: The winds and ſeas obey his voice: he can with a word turn the ſtorm into a calm, Pſalm cvii. 29. or order means for your preſervation, when you ſeem loſt to the eye of ſenſe and reaſon. I have heard of a young man, that being in a great ſtorm at ſea, was obſerved to be very cheerful, when all the reſt were as dead men; and being aſked the reaſon of his cheerfulneſs in a caſe of ſo much danger? He replied, 'Truly I 'have no cauſe to fear, for the pilot of the ſhip is my father." O it is an unſpeakable comfort when a man hath committed himſelf unto the hands of God, as a Father, and truſted him over *all!*

(5.) Pray for counſel and direction in all your affairs and undertakings, and lean not to your own underſtandings. "I know, O Lord, "(ſaith the prophet) that the way of man is not in himſelf, neither is "it in him that walks, to direct his own ſteps," Jer. x. 23. Undertake nothing without aſking God's leave and counſel. How many that have ſtronger heads than you, have miſerably ruined themſelves and their deſigns by truſting to their own prudence? "A man's "heart (ſaith Solomon) deviſeth his way; but the Lord directeth his "ſteps," Prov. xvi. 9. We muſt ſtill preſerve the power of God's providence, ſaith one;* God would not have us too carnally confi-

* Manton on Jude. It is a robbery to uſe goods without the owner's leave. We forget to bid ourſelves good ſpeed, when we do not acknowledge God's dominion. This is but a piece of religious manners.

dent. The Lord can blaſt your enterprize, though managed with never ſo much wiſdom and contrivance. You are not only to look to God as the *author* of *ſucceſs*, but as the *director* and *guide* of the *action*. It is by his conduct and bleſſing, that all things come to paſs. If your deſigns ſucceed not, you are preſently ready to aſcribe it to ill fortune, and ſay, you had bad luck; when indeed you ruined it yourſelves, in the firſt moulding it, by undertaking it without aſking counſel of God: "In all thy ways acknowledge him," Prov. iii. 6.

(6.) Pray for ſucceſs upon your lawful employments and deſigns, and own it to be from the Lord. You have an excellent pattern in Abraham's ſervant, Gen. xxiv. 12. "O Lord God of Abraham thy "ſervant, ſend me good ſpeed this day." He reverences the ſovereignty of providence, and acknowledges ſucceſs to be a flower of the imperial crown, and the bridle that God hath upon the reaſonable creature, to diſpoſe of the ſucceſs of human affairs. I look on that buſineſs or deſign in a fair and hopeful way to proſper, wherein we have engaged God to be with us, by aſking his counſel, and recommending the ſucceſs to his bleſſing. Theſe are the mercies you are to pray for.

*Secondly*, Next I will ſhew you what influence prayer hath into thoſe mercies you are to pray for; and it hath much every way. To be ſhort, it hath a threefold influence into them.

(1.) It is a proper and effectual mean to obtain and procure them. God will have every thing fetched out by prayer, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for "them." God gives not our mercies for prayers, nor will he give them without our prayers. This is the ſtated method in which our mercies are conveyed to us; and therein the wiſdom and goodneſs of God are eminently diſcovered. His wiſdom in making us to ſee the Author of every mercy in the way of receiving it, and ſecuring his own glory in the diſpenſing of every mercy: His *goodneſs* to us, in ſweetening every mercy this way to us, and raiſing its value in our eſtimation. Prayer coming between our wants and ſupplies is a ſingular mean to raiſe the price of mercies with us, and engage us to due improvements of them. So that is an idle pretence for any to ſay, God knows our wants, whether we pray or not; and if mercies be decreed for us, we ſhall have them, though we aſk them not: for though God knows our wants, yet he will have us to know them too, and ſenſibly to feel the need of mercy. And though prayer be altogether needleſs to his *information*, yet it is very neceſſary to teſtify our ſubmiſſion; And though it is true, if God have decreed mercy for us, we ſhall have it; yet it is not true, that therefore we need not to pray for it: For decrees exclude not the ſecond means, nor render the creature's duty unneceſſary. "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the "Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected "end. Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto "me, and I will hearken unto you," Jer. xxix. 11, 12. So that

it is plain, mercies muſt be expected in the way of prayer, that being God's appointed way, and ſtated method in the diſpenſing of them.

(2.) As prayer hath influence into the procuring of our mercies, ſo it hath a ſingular influence into the ſweetening of them: no mercies ſo ſweet as thoſe that are received upon the knee. There is a two-fold ſweetneſs men taſte in their earthly enjoyments: one is *natural*, and that thoſe that never eye God in them, may reliſh as much as others; the other is *ſpiritual* and ſupernatural, reſulting from the conſideration of the way in which, and the end for which they are given: and I am confident, ſuch is the refreſhing ſweetneſs of mercies coming in the way of prayer, that they derive a thouſand times more ſweetneſs from the channel through which they come, than they have in their own natures. So that it was rightly obſerved by him that ſaid, 'A believer taſtes more ſweetneſs in the common bread he eats 'at his own table, than another can do in the conſecrated bread he 'eats at the Lord's table.' And then,

(3.) Prayer hath a ſanctifying influence upon all our enjoyments, and therefore no wonder it makes them ſo ſweet: what you obtain this way, you obtain with a bleſſing, and that is the ſweeteſt and beſt part of any enjoyment. So you find, 1 Tim. iv. 5. every creature is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer. One mercy of this kind is better than ten thouſand promiſcuouſly diſpenſed in the way of common providence: by theſe no man knows love or hatred; but theſe ſurely come from God's love to us, and end in the increaſe of our love to him. So that you ſee prayer hath a manifold influence upon our mercies: But it is not any kind of prayer that doth thus procure, ſweeten, and ſanctify our mercies to us: ſome men's prayers rather obſtruct than further their mercies; but if it be the fervent prayer of a righteous man, directed by the rule of the word to the glory of God, we may ſay of ſuch a prayer as David ſaid of Saul's ſword, and Jonathan's bow, it never returns empty*.

*Thirdly*, I ſhall ſhew what aid and aſſiſtance the prayers of others may give to the procurement of the mercies we deſire; for you ſee this inſtance in the text, it was the united joint-prayers of the diſciples with Paul, that on this occaſion was judged neceſſary.

Now conſidering prayer according to its uſe and end, as a mean of obtaining mercy from the Lord; the more diſpoſed, apt, and vigorous the means are, the more *ſurely* and *eaſily* the mercies are obtained which we pray for. There may be much zeal, fervency, and ſtrength in the prayer of a ſingle ſaint: Jacob alone may wreſtle with God, and as a prince prevail; but much more in the joint, united force of many Jacobs. *Vis unita fortior;* if one can do much, many can do more. O what may not a bleſſed combination of holy and humble ſpirits obtain from the Lord! If one man's heart be dead and out of tune, another's may be lively and full of affection. Beſides,

* If the good, aſk good it is in a good manner, and for a good end.

God delights in thoſe acts of mercy moſt, by which many are refreſhed and comforted; and where there is a common ſtock of prayers going, like a common adventure in one ſhip, there the return of prayer, like the return of ſuch a ſhip, makes many glad hearts. Certainly it is of great advantage for the people of God, to engage as many as they can to pray for them. When Daniel was to obtain that ſecret from the God of heaven, Dan. ii. 17. 18. he makes uſe of his three friends to improve their acquaintance with God, and intereſt in God for him upon that occaſion. "Then Daniel went to his "houſe, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Miſhael, and "Azariah his companions, that they would deſire mercies of the "God of heaven concerning this ſecret." Some Chriſtians have greater intimacies with God than others, they are ſpecial favourites in the court of heaven; and what an advantage it is to be upon their hearts, when they are with God, judge ye. I remember St Bernard having ſpoken of the due frames and tempers that Chriſtians ſhould ſtrive to work their hearts into when they are engaged in this work of prayer, concludes with this requeſt, *Et quum talis fueris, memento mei. And when thy heart* (ſaith he) *is in this temper, then remember me.* Oh! it is a ſingular mercy to be intereſted in their prayers that are in ſpecial favour with God! It is true, Jeſus Chriſt is the great favourite, for whoſe ſake all prayers are heard: and without his interceſſion, the interceſſions of an Abraham, a Moſes, a Jacob, ſignify nothing; but in the virtue of his interceſſion, the interceſſions of others may be ſingularly advantageous to us. Job's friends were good men, but yet they muſt go to Job, and get his prayers for them before God would be intreated for them, Job xlii. 8.

And, indeed, upon the contrary, it is a ſad ſign that God deſigns not to give us that mercy which he takes off our own hearts, or the hearts of others from praying for. When he ſaith, Pray not for ſuch a man, or for ſuch a mercy for him, the caſe then becomes hopeleſs, the mercy is ſet, and there is no moving it, Jer. xiv. 11. But if once a ſpirit of prayer be poured upon you, and upon others too in your behalf, you may look upon the mercy as even at the door, and count it as good as if it were in your hand. And thus you ſee what the mercies are you ſhould pray for; what influence prayer hath upon them; and what aſſiſtance the prayers of other Chriſtians may contribute to the obtaining of them; that ſo your hearts may be excited and encouraged, not only to pray for yourſelves, but to engage as many as you can to ſeek the Lord for you, as you ſee Paul here did, when he was undertaking his dangerous voyage. In the next place I ſhall apply it.

*Uſe* 1. And, firſt, This may ſerve ſharply to reprove the generality of our ſeamen, who mind every thing neceſſary to their voyage, except prayer, the principal thing; who go out in voyages without aſking God's leave or bleſſing. And here three ſorts of perſons fall under conviction, and juſt rebuke.

*Firſt*, Such as do but mock God, and delude themſelves by heartleſs, dead and empty formalities. Some there be that dare not altogether ſlight and neglect prayers, but *pro forma*, they will do ſomething themſelves; and it may be as a compliment, or, at moſt, as a cuſtomary thing, will deſire the prayers of others: but, alas! there is no heartineſs or ſincerity in theſe things; they are no way affected with the ſenſe of their own wants, ſins, or dangers; they never underſtood the uſe, nature, or end of prayer. We blame the blind Papiſts, and that juſtly, for their blind devotions, who reckon their prayers by number, and not by weight; and truly, there is but little difference between theirs, and ſome of our devotions. It is * St Auguſtine's counſel, "Do you learn to have in your hearts what "every one hath in his lips." O that you would once learn to be in earneſt with God! to pray as men that underſtand with whom you have to do; and what great things you have to tranſact with God! ah, my friends, you may believe it, that if ever you had felt the weight of ſin upon your conſciences, and had had ſuch ſick days and nights for it, as ſome have had, you would not aſk a pardon ſo coldly and indifferently as you do. If you did but know the benefit of God's preſence with you in troubles, how ſweet it is; or could but apprehend how terrible a thing it is to be left of God, as Saul was, in the day of diſtreſs, you would weep and make ſupplication for his gracious preſence to go forth with you; and would ſay, with Moſes, "If thy "preſence may not go with me, then carry me not hence." But, alas! theſe things appear not to you in their reality and importance. And hence is all that wretched formality and deadneſs of ſpirit.

*Secondly*, It rebukes much more ſuch as wholly ſlight and neglect prayer, as a uſeleſs and vain thing; who undertake deſigns without prayer, not at all acknowledging God in any of their ways. And it is juſtly to be ſuſpected, there are multitudes of ſuch practical atheiſts among ſeamen, as well as other orders of men. Poor men! my heart mourneth over you; you are certainly a forlorn ſet of men, who live without God in the world. It was anciently ſaid, "he that would "learn to pray, let him go to ſea †:" But now, how long may a man be at ſea, before he hear a praying ſeamen! Let your families from which you part, witneſs what conſcience you have made to ſeek God, as you have been here directed, before your outſet: it is ſaid, Deut xxxiii. 18. to the tribe of ſeamen, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy "going out." But in this caſe we may invert the words, and ſay, *Mourn, O ye ſeamen, in your going out.* How deplorable a caſe is this? Let your cabins witneſs what conſcience you make of the duty of prayer: you can talk and ſleep there, but when did you pray there? You there hear the voice of God in the roaring ſeas; but when did God hear your voice in prayer? You ſee the wonders of God in the

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* *Diſcite habere in corde, quod omnis homo habet in lingua.* Aug. in Pſ. 32.

† *Qui neſcit arare, diſcat navigare.*

deeps, wonders of *creation*, and wonders of *preſervation*; but mean time you yourſelves are the greateſt wonders that are to be ſeen in the ſea: men immediately depending upon God for their lives, liberties, and eſtates, every moment, and not once owning r acknowledging him by prayer.

The very * Heathens will riſe up in judgment againſt you, and condemn you. I remember Plato brings in Alcibiades aſking Socrates, How he ought to expreſs his reſolution and purpoſes? To whom he thus anſwereth; "Before every undertaking thou muſt ſay, "If God will." And we know the eaſtern nations would undertake nothing of moment, without firſt acknowledging God by prayer. The Greeks συν Θεω, by the leave or bleſſing of God, is known to all. The Turks will condemn ſuch as you are, for they fail not to pray five times a day, how urgent ſoever their buſineſs be. The blind and ſuperſtitious Papiſts will condemn you, with whom it is a proverb, *Maſs and meat hinder no man.* Oh! whither will you turn? And who ſhall comfort you, when trouble comes upon you? Wonder not at croſſes and diſappointments in your buſineſs; how can you expect it ſhould be otherwiſe, as long as God is neglected, yea, diſowned? Say not, this is the fruit of *ill luck*, but of your profane neglects. If the ſucceſs of all your buſineſs depends upon God (as none but Atheiſts dare deny) then certainly the directeſt and readieſt courſe a man can take to deſtroy all, is to diſengage God by a ſinful neglect of him. The moſt compendious way to ruin, is to forget God, and caſt off prayer. "Pour out thy fury (ſaith the prophet) upon the heathen "that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy "name." Jer. x. 25. Will nothing leſs than extremity make you cry to God? Wonder not then, if God bring you unto that extremity which your profaneneſs makes neceſſary for your awakening.

*Thirdly* and *laſtly*, How much ſadder, and more deplorable, is the caſe of thoſe that not only neglect to call upon the name of God by prayer, but do alſo wound his name through and through by their curſed oaths and blaſphemies? who inſtead of going on board praying, as Paul here did, go on board curſing, ſwearing, and blaſpheming his great and dreadful name; not going from their *bended knees*, but drunken *ale-benches*, to the ſhip.

O the admirable patience of God! O the power of his long-ſuffering! that ever that ſhip ſhould ſwim one hour above water, that carries ſuch loads of ſin and guilt within it! It is noted in Gen. iv. 26. in the days of Seth, "That then men began to call upon the name of the "Lord." Some tranſlate the word לקרא *invocation*, or prayer, and ſome profanation; then began profaneneſs in calling upon the name of the Lord. In a mournful feeling of this diſhonour done to God by it, Seth calls the ſon that was born to him in thoſe times, *Enoch*, or *Sorrowful*. Sure I am, however the word be here to be tranſlated,

* Αλλα πως χρη λεγειν; *cui reſpondet* Socrates. Οτι εαν Θεος εθελη. Plato in Timeo.

there is a vile generation in our days, that inſtead of calling upon the name of the Lord by prayer, do call upon it profanely, rending and tearing that great and terrible name with the language of hell. Poor man! with what hope or encouragement can thoſe lips of thine, in the day of thy extremity, cry, *Mercy! mercy!* that have ſtruck through the ſacred name of God ſo many times with blaſphemy! O that you would lay it to heart! O that this day God would ſet your ſins in order before you.

Is this a beginning that promiſes a comfortable iſſue? Do you thus prepare yourſelves to meet death and danger? O my ſoul! come not thou into their ſecrets! O let God rather ſtrike me perfectly dead whilſt I live, than afflict my ſoul through my ears with theſe dreadful dialects of the damned.

*Uſe* 2. In the next place, this point is exceeding uſeful, by way of *exhortation*, to perſuade all men, and particularly ſeamen, to be men of prayer; to imitate that noble pattern in the text, and no longer to live in the neglect of a duty ſo neceſſary, ſo ſweet, and ſo beneficial to them, as the duty of prayer is. O that you did but know the excellency of this duty! how would you give yourſelves unto prayer! As David ſpeaks, Pſalm cix. 4. Now to perſuade you to be praying men, and no longer to live in the neglect of ſo excellent a duty, I will offer theſe motives to your conſideration.

Motive 1. *God hath ſtiled himſelf a God hearing prayer.* For your encouragement to this duty, he hath aſſumed this title to himſelf, Pſalm lxv. 2. "O thou that heareſt prayer, unto thee ſhall all fleſh "come." You cry not as the Heathens do, to ſtocks and ſtones, that cannot help or hear them that ſeek to them, but to the living and true God, by whom never did any upright ſoul loſe a prayer. And to come home to your caſe more fully, he is a God that hears the prayers of poor diſtreſſed men upon the ſeas, when all hope and human help have utterly failed them. So you read in Pſalm cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. "They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, "that do buſineſs in great waters; theſe ſee the works of the Lord, "and his wonders in the deep: for he commandeth, and raiſeth "the ſtormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof: they mount "up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their ſoul is "melted, becauſe of trouble. They reel to and fro, and ſtagger "like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry "unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their "diſtreſs." So that what the Pſalmiſt elſewhere ſpeaks of the myſtical depths of trouble, is true here even in a proper literal ſenſe: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord, hear my voice," Pſal. cxxx. 1, 2. Many a prayer hath been heard, and miraculouſly anſwered upon the ſea. There have men been convinced, and fully ſatisfied, that it is not in vain to cry to the Lord. So evident and clear have been the appearances of God at the cry of the poor di-

ſtreſſed creatures, that they have ſenſibly and thankfully acknowledged him according to his name; "The hope of the ends of the earth, "and the confidence of them that are afar off upon the ſea," Pſalm lxv. 5. Who is there among you, that has not either heard of, or himſelf been an example, and inſtance of this truth? I might here inſert many famous examples to confirm it, but the caſe is too plain to need them, and it would be too great a digreſſion.

Motive 2. *Prayer is certainly the beſt relief to the diſtreſſed.* We may ſay of it, as David ſaid of the ſword of Goliath, give me that, for there is none like it. You that are ſeamen, know what the uſe of the *pump* is, when the waters leak into your ſhip, and of what uſe the ſcupper-holes are to you, when waves break and daſh over your necks: why, of the ſame uſe is prayer, when ſorrow leaks into your hearts, and diſtreſſes are ready to overwhelm your ſouls. This gives a vent to that which elſe would quickly ſink you. "Your heart ſhall "live that ſeek the Lord," Pſalm lxix. 32. Prayer will buoy up your fainting ſpirits; it will ſenſibly eaſe an oppreſſed heart. No fear of fainting, while a man continues praying. Luther was wont to call prayers the leeches of his cares and troubles. O but if troubles come in upon a man every way, and he have no vent, no outlet for them when the ordinary vents of reaſon, courage, and reſolution are all choaked (as ſometimes they are) and there is no ſuccour or relief coming in from heaven; what a wretched forlorn condition is ſuch a poor creature in? O therefore get acquaintance with this excellent duty.

Motive 3. *All ſecondary means of deliverance and comfort neceſſarily depend upon the will and pleaſure of God, and ſignify nothing without him.* What the Pſalmiſt ſaith of an horſe, I may ſay of a ſhip, Pſalm xxxiii. 17. That it is a vain thing for ſafety. Alas! what a poor defence is it againſt thoſe giant-like waves of the ſea? And that men (eſpecially ſeamen) may be convinced of this, God hath many times cauſed thoſe ſtately and ſtrong-built ſhips to periſh, and be daſhed all to pieces, and preſerved thoſe that were not ſafe in them upon a plank or broken piece of the ſhip, Acts xxvii. 44. which has carried them more ſafely to the ſhore than it could do. And will you not yet ſee that means ſignify nothing without God, and that your dependence upon him is neceſſary in every condition, and the acknowledgment thereof ſo too? I am perſuaded there would not be half ſo many ſhipwrecks and diſappointments as there are, if your carnal confidence in the means were leſs, and your reliance upon the Lord more. Therefore it is that you ſo often receive the ſentence of death in yourſelves, that you may learn not to truſt in yourſelves, but in God. Oh! were but your ſails filled by prayer, how proſperous would your deſigns be?

Motive. 4. *Whatever deliverances from dangers, or ſucceſs in buſineſs, you receive out of the way of prayer, can yield you but little comfort; for they are not ſanctified to you.* You may be delivered, though you pray not,

and ſucceſs may follow thoſe that ſeek not God for it; but that which you call deliverance, is rather a reſervation to future miſery; and that you call ſucceſs, is but a ſnare to your ſouls. You have the things, but not the comfort and bleſſing of them God may you give your deſire to your ruin; your lives may be reſcued for a time from death, that you may fill up the meaſure of your iniquities Your affairs may proſper, and that proſperity may deſtroy you, Prov. i. 32. At beſt it is but an effect of common providence; and of ſuch deliverances you can never ſay as Hezekiah ſaid of his; and every one that receives the like mercy in the way of prayer, may ſay of his, Iſa. xxxviii. 17. "But thou haſt in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of cor-"ruption; for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back." I deny not, but a deliverance by the hand of common providence is a mercy in itſelf; and it may prove a very great mercy to you in the event, if time thereby added to your life be a ſpace of repentance; elſe it is but a ſhort reprieval of your damnation, and leaves you to periſh under greater guilt than was upon you before. But, on the contrary, how ſweet are thoſe mercies that come in the way of prayer; that diſcover God's love to you, and inflame yours to him? One ſuch mercy is worth a thouſand of the former.

Motive 5. *Conſider all you that go out without prayer, how ſoon you may be out of a capacity of prayer.* Now you will not, and ſhortly you may not, have one opportunity to pray for evermore: now unbelief ſhuts your mouths, and ſhortly death may do it. How ſoon may you be paſt your prayers, both your own and others, and be fixed by death in your unalterable condition? O ſeek the Lord therefore whilſt he may be found, call upon him whilſt he is yet near. Now is your praying ſeaſon, hereafter there will be no uſe of prayer. "For this "(ſaith the Pſalmiſt) ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in "a time when thou mayeſt be found: ſurely in the floods of great "waters, they ſhall not come nigh unto him." Pſal. xxxii. 6. i. e. ſaith Deodate upon the place, in the time of the general deſtruction of ſinners, as it was in the deluge; then there is no coming nigh to God by prayer, nor canſt thou come nigh him in the day of thy particular deſtruction, by the flood of great waters. O therefore live not a day longer in the profane and ſinful neglect of this great duty of prayer!

Object. *Why, but I obſerve thoſe that pray not, generally eſcape as well as they that do.*

*Anſw.* This objection was once made by a ſoldier in the time of fight, when he was preſſed by his companion to pray; and God quickly ſtopped his blaſphemous mouth with a mortal bullet. Have a care of ſuch bold atheiſtical pleas; they greatly provoke the Lord againſt you: I had rather die praying, than live prayerleſs.

Object. *But to what purpoſe is it for me to pray, if I am unregenerate? God hears not ſuch prayers, if I make them: and, beſides, the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

*Anſw.* Labour therefore to get into a regenerate ſtate, and be not perſuaded to reſt a day longer in ſo ſad a condition. However, in the mean time you muſt know, that prayer being a part of natural worſhip, all men, even the unregenerate, are obliged to it by the light and law of nature; otherwiſe the neglect of it could not be their ſin.

Object. *But many pray, and receive not: I myſelf have often done ſo.*

*Anſw.* "You aſk, and receive not, becauſe you aſk amiſs," Jam. iv. 3. If we were diſpoſed to receive as God is to give, we ſhould not be long without the anſwer of our prayers.

(1.) If your perſons were accepted through Chriſt, your prayers ſhould be accepted too, Gen. iv. 4. But you are in a ſtate of nature, deſtitute of the Spirit, John xv. 7. And ſo your voice is to God not the voice of a child, but a ſtranger.

(2.) If your prayers were regulated by the will of God, they could not miſs of the deſired ſucceſs; 1 John v. 14. "If we aſk any thing "according to his will, he heareth us."

(3.) If your prayers had more faith and fervency, they would not return empty; ſee Jam. i. 6. and v. 16. Well then, object no more againſt your duty, but in the fear of God, apply yourſelves to it, and dare not to go forth in any deſign, until thou haſt by prayer recommended thyſelf and thy affairs to God. Go alone, my friends, retire from the world; and ſay not you cannot ſpare time for prayer; better any thing elſe were neglected than this. Tell the Lord, thou art now launching forth into the ocean, and knoweſt not what this voyage may bring forth. Poſſibly thou mayeſt never return to the land of thy nativity any more; but however it ſhall pleaſe him to diſpoſe the event, beſeech him with all earneſtneſs, that thou mayeſt have the pardon of ſin ſealed to thee before thou go. O beg him to ſeparate guilt from thy perſon, before thou be ſeparated from thy habitation and relations; leſt that ſtroke that ſhall ſeparate thy ſoul from thy body, ſhould eternally ſeparate both ſoul and body from God.

Deſire of the Lord that his preſence may go with thee wherever thou ſhalt go. Tell him it is the fountain both of thy ſafety and comfort. Deſire him if his preſence may not go with thee, not to carry thee hence. All the relief thou haſt againſt trouble, is wrapped up in that promiſe of his, *I will be with him in trouble.* Tell him, thoſe will be taſteleſs comforts, and ſuccourleſs troubles, in which he is not.

Intreat the Lord with all importunity, to keep thee by his fear, from the ſins and temptations that are in the world. Tell him thou art ſenſibly affected with the danger which thy own corrupt heart will every where expoſe thee to: ſins in buying and ſelling, into which thou mayeſt eaſily be drawn by an earthly covetous heart: ſins in drinking, wherein thou mayeſt be entangled (except he keep thee) by evil company and an irregular appetite: ſins of uncleanneſs,

by which thou mayeſt be overcome in the abſence of lawful remedies, and preſence of alluring objects, except his fear quench the temptation, and break the ſnare.

Be earneſt alſo with the Lord for his gracious protection of thee in all thy dangers. Tell him, thou canſt not be in ſafety any where, but under the ſhadow of his wings. Tell him, *at what time thou art afraid, thou wilt truſt in him;* and beſeech him, that when thy heart ſhall be overwhelmed with fears and troubles, he will lead thee to the rock that is higher than thee. Beſeech him alſo to give thee counſel in all thy ſtraits and difficulties, that thou mayeſt not lean to thine own underſtanding, but that he will make thy way plain before thee.

And if it be his good pleaſure, that he would bleſs thy juſt and honeſt enterprizes with ſucceſs and proſperity: which if he ſhall do, tell him it is thy deſire, and beg the aſſiſtance of his grace, that thou mayeſt improve all thy mercies to his praiſe. If thus you ſet forth in the fear of God, you may expect a ſweet ſucceſs, and happy iſſue.

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# *The Seaman in a Storm.*

## SERMON II.

PSAL. cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

*They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters; theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble. They reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their diſtreſs.*

THIS *pſalm* contains an excellent account of the myſterious and admirable effects of providence: and this *paragraph* contains that vein or branch of *divine providence* which reſpects ſeamen; a ſort of men more immediately depending upon the favour of providence than any men in the world; though all do neceſſarily and continually depend upon it.

In theſe verſes we have a deſcription, both (1.) of the perſons, (2.) of the danger, (3.) of the deliverance, by the wonderful working of *divine providence* for them.

*Firſt*, A deſcription of the perſons about whom this wonderful providence is exerciſed: "They that go down to the ſea in ſhips; that "do buſineſs in great waters;" the periphraſis of a *ſeaman*. Theſe

are ſaid *to go down to the ſea in ſhips*, not becauſe the ſea is lower than the land, but becauſe it is lower than the ſhore, which is the rampart raiſed by providence againſt its inundations. And their end or deſign in going down into the ſea, is not pleaſure and recreation, but to do buſineſs, i. e. to export and import ſuch wares and commodities as are neceſſary, if not to the being, at leaſt to the well-being of the ſeveral kingdoms and countries of the world. Theſe are the men here ſpoken of, who "ſee (more than any) the works of the "Lord, and his wonders in the deep." Works and wonders by an ἓν διὰ δυοῖν, an uſual figure, is as much as his wonderful works; namely, of *creation*, in the ſtrange and monſtrous productions of the ſea; and of *preſervation*, with reſpect to themſelves, in the dreadful dangers they there encounter. Thus the perſon or ſubject is deſcribed.

*Secondly*, The danger is likewiſe deſcribed in which theſe ſea-faring men are ſometimes involved: and indeed the Pſalmiſt here gives us a very rhetorical and elegant deſcription of their condition in the ſtormy ſea; and ſhews us how deplorable their ſtate and condition is at ſuch a time. Where we are to note both the cauſes and effects of theſe tempeſts.

1. The cauſes; and they are twofold.

*Firſt*, The principal cauſe, the will and pleaſure of God. He commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy winds. This is God's prerogative; none can raiſe winds but himſelf; and if devils or witches do it at any time, yet it is ſtill by his permiſſion; as you ſee in Job i. 12, 19. the Lord is ſaid to hold the wind in his fiſts, Prov. xxx. 4. as a man holds a wild fierce beaſt in a chain, or by a collar: and when they blow, "He brings them out of his treaſuries," Pſal. cxxxv. 7. There is indeed a natural cauſe of winds, of whom philoſophers give us this rational account, 'That it is a hot and dry exhalation raiſed 'from the earth by the power of the heavenly bodies, which being 'repelled or forced back by the coldneſs of the middle region, moves 'obliquely or ſlantingly, and ſometimes very violently through the 'air.' But though this be the natural cauſe of the winds, yet this doth not at all reſtrain the abſolute ſovereignty of God over them. It is he *that commands and raiſeth them*, as the text ſpeaks; and though it be ſaid, John iii. 8. "The wind blows where it liſteth;" yet that expreſſion makes it not an arbitrary creature; but the meaning is, either thus, It blows where it liſteth, for any oppoſition that man can make to it, though it cannot blow where it liſteth in reſpect to God. Or thus, ſuch is the great variableneſs and inſtability of the winds, blowing now this way, now that, that it ſeems to move with a kind of ſpontaneity, as a bird doth in the air: though indeed it doth but ſeem ſo, for all its motions are ordered of the Lord. And you cannot ſay in this ſenſe, as 1 Kings ix. 11. "That God is not in the "wind." Now when it pleaſeth the Lord to ſhew his power upon the great deeps, he ſends forth theſe winds out of his treaſure. This is the principal cauſe. Then next,

2. We have the inſtrumental, ſubordinate and next cauſe of the ſtorm; and that is, the 'winds lifting up the waves of the ocean.' There is naturally in the ſea a continual agitation and rolling of its waters hither and thither; it *cannot reſt*, as the prophet ſpeaks of it; but when a violent wind blows upon it, the ocean is incenſed and enraged; and the winds roll moving mountains of water before them. Then, like wild beaſts, the waves ſeem to break looſe and rage; not only to be *latrantes undas*, as Virgil calls them, *barking waves*, but κυματα αγρια, *raging waves*, as Jude ſpeaks, ver. 13. Yea, *roaring waves*, as our Saviour ſtiles them, Luke xxi. 25. Thus of the cauſes of the ſtorm principal and ſubordinate. Next we have,

*Secondly*, The terrible effects of the tempeſts, and that both upon their bodies and their minds.

(1.) External upon their bodies; it toſſes them up and down in a dreadful manner, which the Pſalmiſt elegantly expreſſes in the text, "They mount up to heaven, they go down to the depths," a lofty hyperbolical expreſſion; very near unto it is that of Virgil:

*Tollimur in cœlum, curvato gurgite; et iidem,*
*Subducta, ad manes imos deſcendimus, unda!* Æn. 3.

They ſeem to mix with the very clouds, and then open deep graves for them in the bottom ſands. Yea, it moves them not only perpendicularly, lifting them up, and caſting them down, but obliquely and circularly alſo. "They reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a "drunken man," or, as ſome tranſlate, *agitantur in gyrum*, they run round: they are, indeed, moved according to the unſtable motion of the waves, on whoſe proud backs they are mounted. This is the external effect of the ſtorm upon their bodies.

(2.) The internal effect of it upon their minds, which is far more terrible. For it is ſaid here, *Their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble, and they are at their wit's end.* Both which expreſſions do import a greater commotion and ſtorm in the paſſions of the mind than that is in the waves of the ſea. The ſtouteſt ſpirit quails and melts when it comes to this; and the wiſeſt artiſt is at his wit's end. Thus you have the deſcription of the perſons, and of their danger, both in the cauſe and effects upon the body and mind. Next,

(3.) We have their deliverance by the wonderful hand of Divine Providence, in ver. 27. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trou-"ble, and he brings them out of their diſtreſs." Their uſual cry in ſuch extraordinary exigencies, is, *mercy! mercy!* Now they can pray that could not pray before. Extremity drives them to their knees, not only with cries, but vows to the Lord, and he delivers them out of their diſtreſſes: ſome delivered one way, and ſome another, but all in a ſtupendous way, which cannot but aſtoniſh them that are ſo delivered, and make them acknowledge the finger of God was in it.

From all this we obſerve,

Doct. *That the preſervations and deliverances of ſeamen in the dreadful ſtorms and tempeſts at ſea, is the wonderful work of Divine Providence.*

" The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that " have pleaſure therein ;" Pſal. cxi. 2. And, among his providential works, none greater and more admirable than thoſe which ſeamen daily behold in their great and marvellous protections upon the ſea.

Now the glory of Divine Providence towards ſeamen ſhines and diſplays itſelf in three things eſpecially, *firſt*, In making the ocean navigable for them at any time. *Secondly*, in preſerving them from ſhipwrecks in the fury and ſtreſs of weather. *Thirdly*, In finding out ways, and ſtrangely providing means of ſafety, when their ſhips are loſt, and broken upon the ſea.

1. It is a wonderful providence of God to make the ocean navigable for men at any time ; that ſuch a fluid body as water is, which cannot ſupport a ſtone or bullet of an ounce weight, ſhould yet, by reaſon of its own ſaltneſs, and the innate property of timber*, be able to ſupport ſhips of ſuch vaſt burden, which are carried from place to place, being mounted on the backs of its proud waves. Who can but acknowledge a moſt wiſe providence, in gratifying the natural wit and deſire of man, which fits him for converſe and traffic with foreign nations ; with inſtruments and materials ſo fit for his purpoſe as timber, iron, hemp, pitch, the loadſtone, and whatever elſe is neceſſary for this purpoſe ? I cannot open the wiſdom of God's providence in this reſpect to better advantage than I find it done by the learned pen of Dr More, in his Antidote againſt Atheiſm, page 58. ' Navi-
' gation (ſaith he) being of ſo great conſequence to the delight and
' convenience of human life, and there being both wit and courage in
' man to attempt the ſeas, were he but fitted with right materials,
' and other advantages requiſite ; when we ſee there is ſo pat
' a proviſion made for him to this purpoſe, in large timber for the
' building of his ſhip, a thick ſea-water to bear the ſhip's burden ; in
' the *magnet* or loadſtone for his compaſs ; in the ſteady and paral-
' lel direction of the axis of the earth for his *cynoſura ;* and then ob-
ſerve his natural wit and courage to make uſe of them ; and how
' that ingenite deſire of knowledge and converſe, and of the improv-
' ing of his own parts and happineſs, ſtir him up to ſo notable a de-
' ſign : we cannot but conclude from ſuch a train of cauſes, ſo fitly
' and congruouſly complying together, that it was really the counſel
' of an univerſal and eternal mind, that hath the overſeeing and gui-
' dance of it,' &c.

2. But (to come home to the caſe before us) that men ſhould be

* Rather by the preſſure of the atmoſphere upon the maſs of water in the ocean. *Editor.*

preſerved at ſea from immediate ruin in the dreadful tempeſts that befal them there; this is a myſterious and admirable work of God: that a poor ſhip ſhould not be ſwallowed up by the furious ocean, when mountains of water come rolling towards it with an horrid noiſe, and give it ſuch dreadful ſtripes: when ſeas roll over it, and ſo cover it with the waves, that for a time they know not whether they ſink or ſwim; to ſee it emerge out of ſuch fatal dangers, keep up its head, and mount upon the backs of thoſe lofty ſeas that threaten immediately to overwhelm it: O how great is the power and care of providence in ſuch a caſe! eſpecially if you conſider theſe following particulars, among many others, which threaten ruin on every ſide: and ſhould but one of theſe many contingencies befal them, in the eye of reaſon they are loſt men.

1. Of how many parts, compared together, doth a ſhip conſiſt? Theſe parts indeed are faſtened together with bolts of iron; but being in ſo many planks, what a wonder is it that none ſprings, that no bolt gives way, or ſeams open, whilſt every part works with ſuch violence, and ſo great a ſtreſs of weather lies upon it. Should ſuch a thing fall out, (as it is a wonder it ſhould not), how ſoon would the ſhip ſwim within as well as without?

2. How often are they put from their courſe by ſtreſs of weather, and know not where they are; not being able, for many days, to take any obſervation? ſo that they muſt go whither winds and waves will drive them: for there is no dropping anchors in the main, nor reſiſting the courſe of the ſeas, to which they can make no more reſiſtance than a child to a giant. And how is it they are not daſhed upon the rocks, or foundered in the ſands, ſeeing the winds ſhape their courſe, and not art? But there is a God that ſteers your courſe for you when you cannot.

3. How often are you even fallen upon rocks and ſhores before you ſee them, and are almoſt paſt *hope* before you begin to *fear?* Sometimes almoſt imbayed, and as much as ever you can do to weather a rock or head-land, which you diſcerned not until it was almoſt too late.

I remember Dr Johnſon, in that ingenious and wonderful narrative of his voyage to the Sound, when he had ſurvived two ſhipwrecks, and was embarked in the third ſhip, 'We had not (ſaith 'he) been above two or three hours at ſea, but there was a ſad diſ-'traction among us in the ſhip, and the mariners crying, *mercy! mer-'cy!* for we had almoſt fallen foul on a rock, which lay ſo cunning 'in the water, that we did not eſpy it till we were upon it; but by 'the goodneſs of God we ſailed cloſe by it, and ſo eſcaped it: the 'leaſt touch of it had been our ruin.'

4. How often do you ride at anchor in furious weather, near rocks and ſhores? Your lives, under God, every moment depending upon a cable and anchor: if the one break, or the other come home, you

are loſt men. And how wonderful is it they do not! what is a cable in a ſtorm, but as the new cords with which the Philiſtines bound Samſon, and as eaſily would they be ſnapt aſunder like a thread of tow, were it not for the care of providence over you? Theſe, and an hundred other accidents which hourly threaten you, might, and would ſend you down to the bottom, but that the Lord permits it not ſo to be.

5. And yet more wonderful than all this; how often doth God ſuffer ſhips to founder and ſink under you, and to be daſhed to pieces againſt the rocks, and yet preſerve you when the ordinary means of preſervation are cut off and gone? Who like theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep?

For, *firſt*, ſometimes a ſmall boat ſhall ſave them, when a ſtout ſhip could not: thus many of them have been wonderfully preſerved; and thus the aforementioned author relates the manner of this wonderful preſervation. 'Our ſhip (ſaith he) had ſprung a leak, or rather a plank, and was ready to ſink: O how the face of every man was changed at this affrightment! one was at his prayers, another wringing his hands, a third ſhedding tears, when we had no need of more ſalt-water. After this fit they fell to work, and (as it is uſual in ſuch extremes) we were all buſy in doing nothing, and did we knew not what. The maſter's mate, whom we ſent down to ſearch out the leak, quickly returned to us with a ſad countenance, trembling hands, gnaſhing of teeth, a quivering tongue, and words half ſpoken, ſignifying unto us, that the wound was incurable. Here was now no room for counſel, neither had we time to aſk one another what was beſt to be done; but we preſently caſt out our long-boat, and ſhot off eight or ten guns, which ſeemed to be ſo many tolls of a paſſing-bell before our death. I leaped into the boat, but leaped ſhort, one leg in the boat, *Alterum in Charontis cymba*. Now were we left in the north ſeas, which ſeldom wear a ſmooth brow; but at this time contending with the wind, ſwelled into prodigious mountains. It blew half a ſtorm, and we were now in a ſmall veſſel: what credit could we give to our ſafety in a ſmall and open ſhallop, when ſo ſtately a caſtle of wood, which we but now loſt, could not defend itſelf againſt the inſolency of the waves? We were many leagues from any ſhore, having no compaſs to guide us, nor proviſions to ſuſtain us, and the night grew black upon us—— Nothing but a miracle could preſerve us, being out of the reach of human help——We fell to prayer, and our extremity pleaded for us:——For in this moment of death, when we were without the leaſt expectation of deliverance, he ſent a ſhip to us, which we muſt needs confeſs to be the finger of God,' &c. Thus he——And thus has been the wonderful door opened in extremity to multitudes more for their eſcape: but, oh! how aſtoniſhing are theſe ways of the Lord? Well may we ſay, "His ways are in the ſea, and his paths

« in the great deep, and his footſteps are not known," Pſalm lxxvii. 19.

*Secondly*, Sometimes they ſhall be caſt upon a rock in the ſea, where they ſhall be preſerved until ſome other way of deliverance come; yea, preſerved ſtrangely, God bleſſing a ſmall matter of proviſion which they ſaved to ſuſtain them; though they ſaid of it, as the widow of Sarepta to the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 12. « I have but « an handful of meal, and a little oil, and I am gathering two ſticks, « that I may go in and dreſs it for me and my ſon, that we may eat « it, and die." Or if they could ſave nothing, yet a few muſcles or birds eggs, with God's bleſſing, have ſuſtained them until the time of mercy come. This hath been the caſe of many. Think upon this you that abuſe the good creatures of God by drunkenneſs: how ſweet would a cup of freſh water be to you when reduced to ſuch extremity? Oh! if your hearts be not harder than the rocks you lay upon, how would ſuch extraordinary mercies melt you into love and thankfulneſs?

*Thirdly*, Sometimes they have been wafted to the ſhore ſafely upon the wreck*, or by making a raft of the broken pieces of the ſhip, and torn ſails, and ropes; and upon this (God knows, a poor ſecurity againſt the boiſterous waves) have they ventured themſelves: a ſinking man (as we ſay) will catch at a bulruſh. Paul, and thoſe that ſuffered ſhipwreck with him, were thus ſaved; « The centurion com- « manded, that they which could ſwim, ſhould caſt themſelves firſt « into the ſea, and get to land; and the reſt, ſome on boards, and « ſome on broken pieces of the ſhip; and ſo it came to paſs that they « eſcaped all ſafe to land," Acts xxvii. 43, 44.

Oh, the miraculous works of the Lord! to ſave by ſuch contemptible and improbable means! Who can but with great joy ſee and acknowledge the finger of God to be here? « Lo, theſe are parts of « his way; but how little a portion is heard of him?" Job xxvi. 14.

1. *Uſe of reproof.* If your preſervation in ſtorms at ſea, be the wonderful works of Divine Providence, then divers of you deſerve to be ſharply reproved from this truth. And I beſeech you ſuffer the word of reproof meekly and penitently. I ſhall ſpeak nothing to reproach you; no, it is not to reproach, but to reform you: and if you hate reproof, and mock at counſel, God may ſhortly ſpeak in ſuch thundering language to your conſciences, as will be terrible for you to bear. I remember, it is ſaid of St Bernard, That whilſt he was ſeriouſly reproving the profaneneſs of one (and if I miſremember not, it was his own brother) who was a ſoldier, and obſerving how he ſlighted his holy and ſerious counſel, his ſpirit was greatly grieved at it, and he told him, 'Brother, God I fear, will ſhortly make way 'to your heart with a ſword, to which my words can find no acceſs:' And the event ſoon verified the ſad prediction. I pray God none of

* *Tabula poſt naufragium.*

you may be taught by captivities and ſhipwrecks what it is to reject faithful reproofs and wholeſome counſel, ſeaſonably given for your good. You that read theſe lines, ſeriouſly aſk your own conſciences theſe following queſtions.

(1.) Have you not ſoon forgotten the works and wonders of the Lord, which your eyes have ſeen? It may be, for the preſent, you have been ſenſibly affected with your danger, and the mercy of God in your deliverance, but hath it remained upon your hearts? I doubt theſe mercies have been written in the duſt, which ſhould have been engraven, as in the rock, for ever. Thus it was with Iſrael, a people that ſaw as many wonders wrought for them by the immediate finger of God, as ever did any people in the world: and yet it is ſaid of them, even after the *Red-ſea* deliverance, in which "God divided "the ſea for them, when the waves thereof roared," Iſa. li. 15. and with which, for the preſent, their hearts were greatly affected; for it is ſaid, Pſalm cvi. 12. "That they believed his word, and ſang his "praiſes;" but in the next verſe you read, that a little time eaſily wiped out the ſenſe of this mercy; for it is ſaid, ver. 13. "They ſoon "forgat his works, and waited not for his counſels." I doubt this was not the ſin of Iſrael only, but is the caſe of many of you at this day. Well, God did not forget you in the time of extremity, though you ſo quickly forgot him. Think not to excuſe yourſelves from this guilt by ſaying, you do ſtill remember the thing: you may do ſo, and yet be ſaid to forget his mercy: for a deliverance may be remembered by him that received it two ways; namely, *ſpeculatively* and *affectingly*. A ſpeculative remembrance is only to call to mind the ſtory of ſuch a danger and preſervation; this you may do, and yet God account himſelf forgotten, except you ſo remember it as ſtill to feel the powerful impreſſions thereof upon your hearts, ſoftening and melting them into thankfulneſs, love, and dependence upon the God of your ſalvations.

(2.) Have you not walked very unanſwerably to your deliverances, yea, and to the ſolemn engagements you made to God in the day of your diſtreſs? I fear ſome of you have walked after God hath reſcued you by a wonderful immediate hand from the jaws of death, as if you had been *delivered to do all theſe abominations*. As it is Jer. vii. 10. It may be the *laſt* week or month you were reeling to and fro upon the ſtormy ſea, and ſtaggering *like* drunken men; and *this*, reeling and ſtaggering along the ſtreets really drunken. O horrid abomination! do ye thus requite the Lord, who pitied you in your diſtreſs, and, being full of compaſſion, ſaved you when you cried to him? Is this the fruit of your wonderful ſalvation? If a man ſhould have told you in that day it would have been thus, you yourſelves could not have believed it, but would have anſwered as Hazael did to the prophet, 2 Kings viii 13. "What! is thy ſervant a dog, that he ſhould do ſuch things?" Yet ſo it was, and ſo it is ſtill: the Lord humble you for this great wickedneſs. If this be all the fruit of mercy and deliverance, it had

been better for you that you had gone down to the bottom then, rather than to live only to treaſure up more wrath againſt the day of wrath, and fill up your meaſure.

(3.) Are there not a ſort of atheiſtical ſeamen, who own not providence at all, either in the raiſing of theſe horrid tempeſts, or in their marvellous preſervation in them! but look on all as coming in a natural way, and their eſcape to be only by good fortune and chance? How wonderful a thing is it in the eyes of all conſidering men, that providence ſhould take any notice of them in a way of favour, that ſo wickedly diſown it, and ſo directly diſoblige it? How can you poſſibly ſhut your eyes againſt ſuch clear light, and ſtop your ears againſt ſuch loud and plain language, whereby the power and goodneſs of God proclaims itſelf to you in theſe providences! Ah! methinks you ſhould moſt readily and thankfully ſubſcribe that great truth, Pſalm lxviii. 20. "He that is our God is the God of ſalvation; and unto "God the Lord belong the iſſues from death." But though men ſee ſigns and wonders, they will not believe; yea, though they themſelves become wonders to the world by their miraculous deliverances, yet ſo brutiſh and ſtupid are they, that they will not ſee the hand that ſaves them. Take heed what you do: you ſet yourſelves in the direct way to deſtruction by this, and highly provoke the Lord to abandon and caſt you out of the care of his providence: and if he once do ſo, you are loſt men.

(4.) And yet more vile (if more vileneſs can be in ſin) than all this: is there not a generation of wretched men among you, that fall a ſwearing, curſing, and blaſpheming God, even when he is uttering his terrible voice in the tempeſt, and every moment threatening to intomb them in the deep? When you ſhould be upon your knees bewailing your ſins, and pleading with God for mercy, (as I doubt not but ſome of you do) to be yet more and more provoking him, daring him to his face; and yet more incenſing his indignation, which is already kindled againſt you; who, that hears this can chuſe but admire the riches of God's patience and forbearance towards ſuch men? The very heathen mariners in a ſtorm *called every man upon his god*, Jonah i. 5. We ſay, extremity will cauſe the worſt of men to pray, and compoſe the vaineſt ſpirit unto ſerioufneſs; but it ſeems by you it will not. Is this the frame and temper you will meet death in? What! ſpeaking the language of devils and damned ſpirits before you come among them; haſtening on your own ruin, as if it were too ſlack and lingering in its motion? The Lord open the eyes of theſe miſerable creatures, and convince them, that they are not only going to hell as others are, but that they are the forlorn of all that wretched crew that are bound thither; and proportionably will be their miſery, except they repent.

2. *Uſe of Exhortation.* This point is yet farther improvable for you by way of exhortation, ſerving to preſs you to thoſe proper duties

which God calls you to by his terrible providential voice in the ſtorms, and by your wonderful deliverances.

1. And the firſt leſſon you are to learn from hence is, *To adore the power of God.* O what a manifeſtation of Divine power is here! you are the men that ſee more than others the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. It is one of God's ends in ſhewing you theſe wonders, "To make his mighty power known," Pſal. cvi. 8. O what a terrible voice doth God utter upon the ſeas when the heavens are black above you, the furious winds and dreadful thunders rattling about you, the ſea and waves roaring beneath you! Is not this voice of the Lord full of majeſty? Doth it not awe your hearts, and make them tremble? In three things his infinite power is diſcovered to you.

*Firſt*, In raiſing theſe terrible tempeſts, and that from ſo ſmall and weak a beginning as a thin vapour from the earth is: this is the wonderful work of God, Pſalm cxxxv. 7. "He cauſeth the vapours to "aſcend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the "rain, he bringeth wind out of his treaſures."

*Secondly*, In limiting and bounding their force and power: what prodigious effects elſe would follow: The wind is a fierce and boiſterous creature, and would (if God did not by his providence reſtrain it) deſtroy and overturn all, both by ſea and land; or if Satan, who is ſtiled *The prince, or power of the air*, were left at liberty to execute his malice by ſuch an inſtrument, not a ſhip ſhould croſs the ſeas, nor a houſe be ſafe at land; as is evident enough by the furious haſte he made to overturn the houſe with an horrible tempeſt upon Job's children, as ſoon as he had received a permiſſion from heaven to do it.

And, *Thirdly*, No leſs viſible is the power of God in calming and appeaſing the ſtormy winds, and remanding them into his treaſures, Pſalm cvii. 29. "He maketh the ſtorm a calm." Yea, he doth ſo in the very nick of time, when all is concluded loſt. Thus you read in Mark iv. 39. "When the waves beat into the ſhip," ſo that it was now full, and the diſciples cried unto the Lord, "Maſter, careſt thou "not that we periſh? He aroſe and rebuked the wind, and ſaid to "the ſea, Peace, be ſtill; and the wind ceaſed, and there was a great "calm." Juſt as one would huſh a child, *Peace, be ſtill.* O the ſovereign power of God! how ſhould it be reverenced and adored by all that behold it in theſe marvellous effects of it?

2. The ſecond leſſon you are taught by this doctrine is, *To admire the mercy of God.* Mercy is no leſs diſcovered than power; yea, the power of God is put forth to give his mercy a fair occaſion to ſhine forth in your deliverance. God ſometimes permits your dangers to grow to an extremity, and delays your deliverances to the laſt moment, till all hopes of ſafety are gone, upon the like reaſon that Lazarus's reſurrection was deferred, that the work of God in your preſervation may commend itſelf to you under the greateſt advantage.

O that you would view theſe mercies in all their endearing circum-

ſtances! I can only hint your duty generally in this caſe; you may enlarge upon it, if you have hearts fit for ſuch a bleſſed work. And mark particularly the multitudes of mercies that are complicated and involved in one deliverance. Obſerve the ſeaſon when, the manner how, the means by which your ſalvation was wrought. It is a thouſand pities that ſo much of God's glory and your comfort, as any one, even the ſmalleſt circumſtance may contain, ſhould ever be loſt.

3. *Laſtly*, And above all, *See that ye anſwer God's ends in your deliverance:* If thoſe be loſt, God may ſay concerning you, as David did of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 21. "Surely, in vain have I kept all that this "fellow hath in the wilderneſs; ſo that nothing was miſſed of all "that pertained to him; and he hath requited me evil for good." So here, in vain I kept this fellow upon the ſea, when I ſuffered others to ſink; in vain have I preſerved his life, liberty, and eſtate ſo often by an out-ſtretched arm of power and mercy to him, ſeeing he requites me evil for good.

O let me intreat you to be careful to comply with the deſigns and ends of God in theſe your wonderful preſervations! If you enquire what God's ends or deſigns in your deliverance are, I anſwer,

*Firſt*, It is to lead you to repentance. "The goodneſs of God "(ſaith the apoſtle) leadeth thee to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. Doſt thou not know the voice of mercy? Why, it beſpeaks thy return to God. It may be thou haſt ſpent all thy life, to this day, in the ſervice of ſin: Thou never redeemedſt one of all thy precious hours to conſider thine own eſtate, to bewail thy ſin and miſery, to ſeek after an intereſt in Chriſt. Why, now here is a providence fallen in that doth, as it were, take thee by the hand, and lead thee to this great and neceſſary work. The end of God in raiſing this ſtorm was to deliver thee from the more dreadful tempeſt of his wrath, which, without repentance, muſt ſhortly overtake thy ſoul in the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. Now God hath awakened thy conſcience by this fright, made it charge home thy ſins upon thee, terrified thee with diſmal apprehenſions of death and hell. O what a fair opportunity and advantage hath he now put into thy hand for repentance, reformation, and gaining an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt! If this ſeaſon be loſt, conſcience ſuffered again to fall into any dead ſleep, and thy heart be again hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, thou mayeſt never have ſuch an opportunity for ſalvation opened to thee any more.

*Secondly*, If this end be anſwered, then a farther deſign God hath in thy deliverance, is to engage and encourage thy ſoul to a dependence upon God in future ſtraits and dangers. This is food for faith; and now you are furniſhed with experience of the power, mercy, and goodneſs of God, to enable you to reſt yourſelves upon him when new exigencies befal you. If God exerciſe you with ſuch extremities another time, you may ſay with the apoſtle, 2 Cor. i. 10. "Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver; in "whom we truſt, he will yet deliver us."

If your firſt deliverance were a deliverance without a promiſe, when you were without Chriſt, what encouragement have you to depend upon him, when his end is anſwered in your repentance and converſion; and, being in Chriſt, are entitled to all the promiſes.

*Thirdly*, and *laſtly*, God's end in your marvellous preſervations and deliverances is to furniſh you for, and to engage you to a life of praiſe. O how ſhould the high praiſes of God be ever in your mouths! you have ſeen his works and wonders in the deeps; and this is it which the Pſalmiſt preſſes upon you as a becoming return for your mercies, in the words following my text; "O that men would "praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to "the children of men!"

O with what warm and enlarged affections ſhould you expreſs your thankfulneſs to the God of your ſalvation! and ſay as David, "What "am I, O Lord God, and what is my father's houſe, that thou "ſhouldſt do ſuch great things for me?" Was ſuch a life as mine worth the working of ſo many wonders to ſave it? O Lord, thou knoweſt it has been a life ſpent in vanity. Thy glory hath not been precious in mine eyes, but my life hath been precious in thine eyes. Many more uſeful, and leſs ſinful than myſelf have periſhed, and I am ſaved. O Lord, ſhew me the deſigns and gracious ends of theſe deliverances. Surely there is ſome great thing to be done by me, or elſe ſo great a ſalvation had not been wrought for me. The Lord ſaw in what a ſad caſe my poor ſoul was, to be ſummoned immediately before his judgment-ſeat: that if I had gone down under all my guilt, I had ſunk to the bottom of hell: But thou, in love to my ſoul, haſt delivered it from the pit of corruption, that I might yet enjoy a ſeaſon for ſalvation, and be once more entruſted with the precious talents of time and means. O that I may not reject or abuſe the grace of God in this new inſtrument, as I have too often done in the former! let me not live as one delivered to commit all theſe abominations!

And now after all that is come upon me for my evils, ſeeing thou, my God, haſt puniſhed me ſo much leſs than my iniquities deſerve; and haſt given me ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould I again dare to break thy commandments? Ezra ix. 13, 14. "O let this new mer-"cy produce a new heart and life!"

THE

# SEAMAN's PRESERVATIVE

IN

# *FOREIGN COUNTRIES.*

## SERMON III.

PSALM cxxxix. 9, 10.

*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt part of the ſea; even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.*

IN this pſalm the omnipreſence and omniſcience of God are the ſubjects of the Pſalmiſt's meditation; and theſe attributes are here promiſcuouſly diſcourſed, not only becauſe of the near affinity that is betwixt their natures, but becauſe the one is the demonſtration of the other: It is evident God knows all things, becauſe he fills all places. Touching the omniſcience of God, he diſcovers the infinite perfection of that attribute by the particular and exact notion it takes of all our ways: verſe 3. "Thou compaſſeſt my paths, and art "acquainted with all my ways." Of all our words; verſe 4. "There "is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it alto-"gether." Yea, of all our thoughts; and that not only in the inſtant of their conception, but long before they were conceived; verſe 2. "Thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off," even from eternity. Thus he diſplays the omniſcience of God: And then to make demonſtration of the truth and certainty of this doctrine of God's omniſcience, he proves it from his omnipreſence: q. d. He that fills all things cannot but know all things. Now God's preſence fills heaven, yea, and hell too, verſe 8. And all parts of the earth and ſea, even the remoteſt, verſe 9, 10. And therefore no creature, nor action of any creature, can eſcape his cognizance. It is not here as among men; if a malefactor be condemned by the laws of one kingdom, he may eſcape by flying into another; but it is far otherwiſe here; for ſaith the Pſalmiſt, (perſonating a guilty fugitive endeavouring to make an eſcape from the arreſt of God's juſtice), "If I take the "wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea; "even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold "me."

In which words you have theſe two things mainly remarkable.

1. The greateſt ſecurity and encouragement to a ſinner ſuppoſed.
2. That ſuppoſed ſecurity and encouragement utterly deſtroyed.

1. The greateſt ſecurity and encouragement to a ſinner ſuppoſed;

" If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts " of the ſea."* Where two things ſeem to offer towards his protection.

*Firſt*, The place; the remoteſt part of the ſea; by which you are to underſtand the moſt obſcure nook in the creation; fartheſt removed from an inſpection or obſervation.

And, *Secondly*, his ſwift and ſpeedy flight after the commiſſion of ſin, to this ſuppoſed refuge and ſanctuary: It is here ſuppoſed, that a ſinner ſhould fly as ſwift as the light of the ſun, which in a moment ſhines from the eaſt to the weſt, and ſo the meaning is, could I flee with a celerity equal to the ſun, or his beams of light, which breaking forth in the morning, do in an inſtant enlighten the remoteſt parts of the hemiſphere: Could I as ſwiftly flee to the moſt obſcure, remote, ſolitary place in all the world. Thus the ſinner's ſecurity is ſuppoſed.

2. This ſuppoſed ſecurity and encouragement is utterly deſtroyed; " Even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right-hand ſhall hold " me." † The leading hand of God is not here to be underſtood, as a directing or guiding hand, to ſhew the fugitive ſinner the way of his eſcape; but contrarily, " Thy hand ſhall lead me," as a keeper leads his priſoner back to the place of cuſtody, from which he endeavoured to eſcape. And the following clauſe is exegitical: " Thy right " hand ſhall hold," or detain *me*, viz. in ſtrict cuſtody. So that the ſum of all is this:

Doct. *That the whole world affords no place of ſecrecy or ſecurity for a ſinner to eſcape the obſerving eye and righteous hand of God.*

Jonah fled from the Lord to Tarſhiſh; but could he eſcape ſo? No, the Lord ſent a ſtorm after him, which brought back the fugitive, Jonah i. 3, 4. We read, Iſa. xxix. 15. of ſuch " as dig deep, " to hide their counſels from the Lord," i. e. They plot, contrive, and ſtudy to conceal their wicked deſigns, to ſin with greateſt ſecrecy and ſecurity. But what can poſſibly be a covering from Him to whoſe ſight all things are naked and manifeſt? Where can a ſinner be hid from him whoſe preſence fills heaven and earth? Jer. xxiii. 25. The ſcripture gives full proof to this great truth. It is clear from Prov. xv. 3. " The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the " evil and the good." And again Job xxxiv. 21, 22. " For his eyes are " upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings; there is no " darkneſs, nor ſhadow of death where the workers of iniquity may " hide themſelves." Whoever goes about to conceal a ſin in ſecret, attempts a fooliſh and impoſſible deſign, Pſalm xliv. 21. " Shall not " God ſearch this out? For he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart:

* He alludes to the ſwifteſt of all motion, even that of light, which ſprings in a moment from eaſt to weſt. *Calvin.*

† *Non accipitur deducere pro viam monſtrare: ſed deducet me manus tua tanquem cuſtos captivum ſibi commiſſum deduxit.* Vatab.

" For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth," 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

Now in the handling of this point I purpoſe to ſhew you,

1. That men are often induced to ſin upon hopes of ſecrecy and concealment.

2. That to ſin upon theſe encouragements, ſtrongly argues their natural atheiſm: They think they are ſafe if men know it not; they reckon not upon God's diſcovery of them.

3. That theſe encouragements to ſin are vain things, it being impoſſible any place can hide a ſinner from God; and how it appears that the eye of God is, and muſt needs be upon us, and our actions, wherever we are, and how cloſely ſoever we endeavour to hide them: And then apply it.

*Firſt*, Men are often induced to commit ſin upon the hopes of ſecrecy and concealment. Sin (eſpecially ſome ſorts of ſin) carry ſo much ſhame and *odium* in them, that it reſtrains men from the open practice of them; but if Satan can perſuade them they ſhall never be divulged to their reproach, they will venture upon them. See that text, " The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, ſaying, " no eye ſhall ſee me, and diſguiſeth his face," Job xxiv. 15. Reckoning himſelf ſecure if he can carry his wickedneſs under a vale of darkneſs, not caring what wickedneſs he doth, ſo he may do it undiſcerned: It is not the acting of ſin, but the diſcovery of it that puts them into terrors. So it is added with reſpect both to the adulterer and the thief, ver. 17. " The morning is to them as the ſhadow of " death, if one know them; they are in the terrors of the ſhadow of " death;" i. e. If a man, eſpecially a man in authority, a magiſtrate meet them, it is as if the image of death paſſed before them in a viſion. So thoſe idolators, Ezek. viii. 12. " Son of man, haſt thou ſeen what " the antients of the houſe of Iſrael do in the dark, every man in " the houſe of his imagery? For they ſay, the Lord ſeeth us not." They conclude all is well, if nothing appear. This encouragement of ſecrecy is the great argument by which Satan prevails with men to commit any ſin that hath ſhame or danger attending it: But his promiſes of concealment are uſually made good, as his promiſes of great wealth are to witches. This is the encouragement.

*Secondly*, Next I will make it evident to you, that to ſin upon this encouragement argues atheiſm in him that commits it. This is plain, for, did men believe the omnipreſence and omniſcience of God, ſuch an encouragement to ſin as ſecrecy could have no force with them. Thus, when the antients of Iſrael practiſed their idolatry in the dark, it is plain they thought God ſaw them not, Ezek. viii. 12. " For they " ſay the Lord ſeeth us not, the Lord hath forſaken the earth:" i. e. They did not really believe God's omnipreſence and omniſcience. And Job tells us, chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. " That if he had beheld " the ſun in his brightneſs," i. e. to admire and worſhip it as a god; or, " his heart been ſecretly enticed, he ſhould have denied the God

" that is above." Every one that is enticed to ſin upon the encouragement of ſecrecy, doth ſo far deny the God that is above. If ſuch a man did really believe there is a God that ſees him, " whoſe eyes " are as flames of fire," Rev. i. 14. " To whom the darkneſs and " the light are both alike," Pſal. cxxxix. 12. it were impoſſible he ſhould be ſo terrified at the diſcovery of a creature, and ſo ſecure and wholly unconcerned at the diſcovery of God: It could not be that the obſervation of the great God ſhould not ſo much trouble them, as the obſervation of a little child.

Thus we find the inward thoughts of men's hearts concerning God diſcovered by their bold attempts upon ſecret ſins, Iſa. xxxix. 15. " Wo to them that ſeek deep to hide their counſel from the Lord, " and their works are in the dark; and they ſay, who ſeeth us, and " who knoweth us?" They think if their works are ſhrouded under a veil of darkneſs, they are ſafe enough; if they can eſcape the bar of an earthly god (a magiſtrate) they ſhall never be accountable at any other bar. We have another ſad inſtance of the ſame impiety in Pſalm lxxiii. 11. " And they ſay, how doth God know? And " is there knowledge in the Moſt High?" If men did not fancy to themſelves there is no God, or (which is all one) that he is like unto themſelves, one that cannot ſee in darkneſs, they could never encourage themſelves as they do, to ſin upon ſuch a fooliſh pretence.

*Thirdly*, But my proper buſineſs in this place, is to prove, that theſe encouragements to ſin are vain things: That no ſinner can hide himſelf from the eye of God. This is plain both from ſcripture and reaſon.

The ſcripture ſpeak full home to this truth. Prov. v. 21. " The " ways of a man are before the Lord, and he pondereth all his paths." To ponder or weigh our paths is more than ſimply to obſerve and ſee them. He not only ſees the action, but puts it into the balances, with every circumſtance belonging to it, and tries how much every ingredient in the action weighs, and what it comes to. So that God hath not only *an univerſal inſpection* upon every action, but he hath a *critical inſpection* into it alſo. " The Lord is a God of knowledge, and " by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3. So Jer. xiii. 25. 27. " Thou haſt forgotten me, and truſted in falſehood: I have ſeen " thy adulteries and thy neighings, the lewdneſs of thy whoredoms " and abominations;" q. d. Thou forgetteſt there is a God in the heavens that beheld thee, and didſt verily believe all was ſafe, becauſe ſecret from man. In this falſhood or cheat put upon thee by the devil and thine own atheiſtical heart, *thou didſt truſt*. But I have ſeen thee, and all thy ſecret lewdneſs. It is a proverb among ſinners, *Si non caſte, tamen caute*. Carry the matter, if not honeſtly, yet warily: If thou haſt a mind to ſin, yet order it ſo that the world may be never the wiſer. But how vain a thing is this? If men do not, the Lord doth ſee it; " I know, and am a witneſs ſaith the Lord," Jer. xxix.

23. Thus the ſcripture ſpeak roundly and fully to the point in hand. But, becauſe the atheiſm of the world is ſo great, and it is a hard thing to convince men of this great truth, ſo as to overawe them from any ſecret ſin by it; I will, by rational arguments, demonſtrate the truth to every man's conſcience, and give you plain and full evidence, that how ſecretly ſoever men carry their ſinful deſigns, yet the Lord muſt needs be privy to them; and it is impoſſible they ſhould eſcape his cognizance.

1. For, *Firſt*, He that formed all cannot but know all: the workman cannot be ſuppoſed to be ignorant of any part of his own work. Now God is the former of all things; every place and every perſon he hath made: where then ſhall the workers of iniquity hide themſelves? You have the folly of ſinners, in thinking to conceal themſelves from the eye of God, convinced and reproved by this very argument, Iſa. xxxix. 15, 16. "Woe unto them that ſeek deep to hide "their counſels from the Lord, and their works are in the dark: and "they ſay, who ſeeth us? And who knoweth us? Surely, your "turning of things upſide down ſhall be eſteemed as the potter's "clay: for, ſhall the work ſay to him that made it, he made me not? "Or, ſhall the thing framed ſay of him that framed it, he hath no "underſtanding?" q. d. Think ye by deep-laid deſigns, by the advantage of darkneſs, by the moulding and new-moulding your crafty deſigns in your heads, as the clay is moulded now unto this, then into the ſhape by the potter's hand, to hide it from me? O brutiſh creatures, and without underſtanding! am not I the God that formed you? And can it be ſuppoſed I ſhould not know the moſt ſecret thoughts, plots, and deſigns of mine own creatures, who cannot contrive a deſign, nor conceive a thought with me? How abſurd is this? Find out a place which God made not, or a creature which he formed not; and then your pretences to that creature's concealment from God in ſuch a place, may have ſome colour: and this argument is again urged to convince the brutiſh atheiſt, Pſal. xciv. 8, 9, 10. "Underſtand, ye brutiſh among the people, and ye fools, when "will you be wiſe? He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? "He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that chaſteneth "the heathen, ſhall not he correct? He that teacheth man know-"ledge, ſhall not he know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of "man, that they are vanity;" ſo that it is the vaineſt of all vanity in the world, to think of hiding your ſins from the Lord.

2. He that ſuſtains all cannot but know and diſcern all. You that ſeek to hide counſel from the Lord, know ye not, "That in him "you live, move, and have your being?" Acts xvii. 28. Do not you derive that very power from him, which you abuſe by ſinning againſt him? And do you depend neceſſarily and continually upon God for all? Muſt he give you the power to move, and by that power can you move beyond him, and get out of his reach? You cannot think a thought without him, and yet can exclude him from thoſe very

thoughts which you had no power to conceive, but from him? Exerciſe but common reaſon in the caſe, and it will hiſs at your abſurd deſigns.

3. He that governs all can be ignorant of nothing. There is a perpetual influence of providence, ſwaying and governing all the creatures, and all their actions; elſe the very ligaments of nature would crack, and the world break up and diſband. This providence extends itſelf to the leaſt and loweſt of creatures and their actions, Luke xii. 6. a ſparrow falls not to the ground without it. "The great God hath ſomething to do about the moſt "minute * and inconſiderable things;" yea, the moſt contingent and uncertain things, as is the diſpoſal of a lot, Prov. xvi. 33. And indeed this omniſcience of God is that which is neceſſary to this univerſal government. How ſhall he rule that perſon, or in that place which he knows not? Indeed earthly governors may do ſo; it is not neceſſary they have a perſonal immediate cognizance of each place and perſon in their dominions: it is enough that they be virtually and mediately governed by them; but it is not ſo with God: it is neceſſary his eye ſhould immediately ſee all the parts of his dominion. He could not rule the world, if he were not an omniſcient God. Pſal. lxvi. 7. "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold "the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themſelves."

4. He that hath ſet a ſpy to obſerve and note what every man doth, cannot but know his actions, how ſecret ſoever they be. Now, ſo it is here; God ſends a ſpy with you, to obſerve and record your moſt ſecret actions and thoughts, in every place, I mean your own conſciences, from whoſe obſervation none of your ways can poſſibly be exempt. The ſenſe of this made the heathen ſay, *Turpe quid anſurus te ſine teſte time.* When thou art attempting a ſinful act, fear thyſelf without any other witneſs; conſcience is privy to your moſt ſecret deſigns and thoughts; 1 Kings ii. 44. "Thou knoweſt all the "wickedneſs which thine heart (i. e. thy conſcience) is privy to:" and if conſcience know all, God muſt needs ſee and know it. So the apoſtle reaſons, from the leſſer to the greater, 1 John iii. 20. "If "our heart condemn us, (which is there put for conſcience) God is "greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." If the ſpirit of a man knows the things of a man, much more he that formed that ſpirit, and endowed man with it.

5. He that knows things more ſecret and unſearchable than our moſt ſecret actions can be, muſt needs know them how ſecret ſoever they be. Now there are many things more cloſe and ſecret than any action of ours can poſſibly be, and yet God knows them. The thoughts of the heart are more ſecret than any external action; ſo ſecret, that no creature can ſearch them; the devil himſelf hath but a conjectural gueſs at them: "But the Lord telleth unto man what is his thought;" as in Amos iv. 13. So Jer. xvii. 10. "I the Lord ſearch the heart, I

* *Deus maximus in minimus.*

" try the reins;" i. e. The moſt obſcure, inward and deep ſecrets lodged in the heart; nay, which is more, he not only knows our thoughts when they are formed and conceived in the heart, but long before their conception; Pſalm cxxxix. 2. " Thou knoweſt my " thoughts afar off." Divines generally interpret it from eternity; even ſo long before they were actually thought, he foreknew every thought we ſhould think; and what can be imagined more ſecret, and undiſcernible, than a future thought!

Now if this be known to him, how much more are our thoughts formed into projects and deſigns, and theſe executed by external actions? O deceive not yourſelves with hopes of ſecrecy! Nothing can be a ſecret to him that knows the counſels of all hearts.

6. He that providentially brings to light the moſt ſecret contrivances of men, and publiſhes them before all Iſrael, and before the ſun, muſt needs ſee them, and know them. How cloſely had Achan covered his wickedneſs: He never ſuſpected a diſcovery, yet God brought it to light. With how much contrivance was the ſin of David covered! yet God diſcovered it: " Thou didſt this thing " ſecretly, but I will do this thing before all Iſrael, and before the ſun," 2 Sam. xii. 12. Hiſtories abound with examples of God's bringing to light murders, ſo ſecretly committed, that it was impoſſible they ſhould ever be revealed in this world, without a miracle of providence; and yet ſo they have been brought to light. Beſſus, having committed ſuch a murder, fancied the ſwallows that were chattering in the chimney, had ſaid, Beſſus killed a man, and thereupon confeſſed the fact. How ſecure were the contrivers of the popiſh powder-plot, that Catholic villany, in a double ſenſe having ſworn all their accomplices to ſecrecy, and managed the whole deſign ſo cloſely, that Guy Faux, upon the diſcovery of it, ſaid, *The devil muſt needs be the diſcoverer of it.* How eaſy were it to expatiate upon this theme? But I will not be tireſome in inſtances: all ages are the witneſſes of this truth. Who can then deny or queſtion that great or confeſſed truth, Dan. ii. 28. " There " is a God in heaven that reveals ſecrets:" and if he reveals them, he muſt needs know them.

7. He that will judge all ſecrets, cannot but know them. " Now " God will judge the ſecrets of men in that great day," Rom. ii. 16. " God will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, " whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccl. xii. *ult.* The Judge of the whole earth will not judge at random; his judgment will be infallible, becauſe his omniſcience is ſo. " His eyes are upon " the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his goings; for he will not lay " upon man more than right, that he ſhould enter into judgment " with God," Job xxxiv 21, 23.

So that the truth of this point is beyond all controverſy and contradiction, that the whole world affords no place of ſecrecy or ſecurity for a ſinner to eſcape the obſerving eye, and righteous hand of God.

The uſes follow in theſe inferences.

1. *Inference*, If this be ſo, then time, place, and opportunity, how much ſoever they ſeem to promiſe ſecrecy and concealment, ſhould never further a temptation to ſin.

Suppoſe all circumſtances concurring, ſo that in the eye of reaſon you ſeem ſecured from the ſhameful conſequences of ſin; yet, methinks, the conſideration of this truth ſhould ſufficiently deter you from a wicked purpoſe; Prov. v. 20. "And why wilt thou, my ſon, be "raviſhed with a ſtrange woman, and embrace the boſom of a "ſtranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, "and he pondereth all his goings." There be four things which ſtrengthen temptations to ſin, and particularly the ſin of uncleanneſs upon ſeamen. *Firſt*, The abſence of lawful remedies. *Secondly*, The preſence of alluring objects. *Thirdly*, The inſtigation of wicked examples. *Fourthly*, And the hopes of concealment, being remote from their acquaintance: ſo that their ſins, in probability, ſhall never diſgrace them. This laſt circumſtance is not the leaſt: O how many hath it prevailed upon! but I hope you will never yield to this temptation, whoſe heart and ſtrength are broken by this conſideration of the eye of God upon you. A chaſte woman being once ſolicited to folly, told him that ſolicited her, ſhe could never yield to the motion, until he could find a place where God ſhould not ſee.

Nay, my friends, it ſhould do more than reſtrain you from the groſs acts of ſin; it ſhould powerfully curb the very thoughts and firſt motions of ſin in your hearts. That was the uſe holy Job made of this truth, Job xxxi. 1. "I have made a covenant with mine eyes; "why then ſhould I think upon a maid? Doth he not ſee my ways, "and count all my ſteps?"

Suppoſe you ſhould carry your wickedneſs ſo cloſe, that none on earth ſhould know it; yet the Lord ſees it, and will bring it into judgment, and your own conſcience is privy to it. I pray, ſirs, tell me, is it not a great comfort to a malefactor, that he acted his crime ſo cloſely, that none but the judge and one authentic witneſs more, (whoſe teſtimony is as good as a thouſand) beheld it? Why, this is the caſe of all ſecret ſinners. But, to preſs home this great and neceſſary truth more particularly, I beſeech you to conſider,

1. God doth not only behold you, but beholds you with deteſtation and abhorrence in your ways of iniquity: It is a ſight that grieves him to the heart, Gen. vi. 5, 6. "And the Lord ſaw the wicked-"neſs of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of "the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Here was wickedneſs, great wickedneſs, breaking out externally, and evil, only evil, and that continually, working internally; ſo that both heart and life were evil extenſively, intenſively, and protenſively. This the Lord ſaw; and how it affected him, the ſixth verſe tells you: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth; "and it grieved him at the heart:" Ah! it cuts him to the heart

to ſee your ſinful hearts and courſes. Nothing can be ſo contrary to the pure and holy nature of God as this is: this made the prophet admire how his patience could endure ſuch a ſight, Heb. i. 13. "Thou "art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look upon ini-"quity; wherefore lookeſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly?" &c. As if he ſhould ſay, Lord, how canſt thou behold thyſelf affronted by vile creatures, and hold thy hands from avenging it? O the ſtupendous patience of God!

2. It doth not only grieve him to the heart, but it puts his patience to the greateſt trial and exerciſe in beholding it: therefore he is ſaid "to endure with much long-ſuffering," Rom. ix. 22. It doth, as it were, create a conflict betwixt his patience and juſtice: he is ſo provoked by your ſin, that he expreſſes it as a difficulty to bear it, Amos ii. 13. "I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is "full of ſheaves:" burdened till the axle-tree of infinite patience be ready to crack under the weight.

Nay, *Thirdly*, He doth not only ſee your evils, but he regiſters and records them, in order to a day of reckoning with you for all together, except ye repent; Deut. xxxii. 34. "Is not this laid up in "ſtore with me, and ſealed up among my treaſures?" A metaphor taken from the clerk of the aſſize, who ſeals up the bag of indictments againſt the time of trial. You think if you can blind the eyes of men, all is well, you ſhall hear no more of it: ah! but it is ſealed up among God's treaſures; i. e. the things he records and reſerves for the day of account.

4. God doth not only ſee you, but he will alſo one day make you ſee yourſelves and your ways, and that with horror and conſternation. You think you ſhall taſte nothing but the ſweet and pleaſure of ſin; but how are you deceived? The days are coming when ſin, that is now pleaſant, ſhall be turned into wormwood and gall. You will not ſee the evil of it; and becauſe you ſee it not, you think God doth not. "Theſe things (ſaith God) haſt thou done, and I kept ſi-"lence, and thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as "thyſelf; but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine "eyes," Pſal. l. 21. God ſees them now, and he will make you ſee them too, by opening your eyes in this world graciouſly, or in that to come judicially.

5. God doth not only ſee your ways, but he will make all the world ſee them too: For, "there is nothing hid that ſhall not be "revealed, nor covered, that ſhall not be made known," Matth. x. 26. "There is a day when God will make manifeſt the hidden "counſels of the heart," 2 Cor. iv. 5. "When that which hath "been ſpoken in darkneſs ſhall be heard in light; and that which "ye have ſpoken in the ears in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed upon the "houſe tops," Luke xii. 3. Well then, whenever the occaſions and opportunities of ſin are preſented to you, under this encourage-

ment of ſecurity, I beſeech you remember this truth, that no place can hide you from the eye of God. He ſees all your ways, yea, he ſees them with abhorrence; the ſight of them is the greateſt exerciſe of his patience. His ſight of them is not a tranſient glance, but he ſees and records your evils; they are ſealed up among his treaſures: He ſees, and will make you ſee them too with horror, when he ſhall ſet them in order before you: he ſees them, and will make angels and men ſee them in the great day. O then, never let ſecrecy any more encourage you to ſin!

2. *Inference.* What prodigious ſinners muſt they be, that ſeek no covert for their ſin in darkneſs, but with an impudent face declare, yea, glory in their ſhame; who are not aſhamed to ſin openly with a bare face, and a whore's forehead? Theſe are ſinners of the firſt magnitude. "They declare their ſin as Sodom, and hide it not," Iſa. iii. 9. It is as natural to man to endeavour to hide his ſin, as Adam, and you ſee from the text, guilty ſinners fain would, if it were poſſible, fly to any obſcure corner from the obſervation of God and men; and it is a mercy God hath planted ſuch an affection as ſhame is, in the ſoul of man, to be a bridle to reſtrain his exorbitant luſts. But yet there is a generation of monſtrous ſinners, who have ſo far unmanned themſelves, "That they are not at all aſhamed when "they commit abominations, neither can they bluſh," Jer. vi. 15. If there be any remains of ſhame left in them, they exerciſe it upon a wrong object: they are aſhamed of that which would be to their glory, and glory in that which is their ſhame; they add impudence to their ſin, and bluſh not to proclaim that which others ſtudy to conceal.

Such a vile temper as this ſhews a man even ripe for wrath; he hath even filled up his meaſure, and is come to the very culminating point and top of wickedneſs. There be ſome men arrived to ſuch a degree of holineſs, that all that converſe with them judge them even ripe for heaven: they ſpeak the dialect, and have the very ſavour of heaven upon them. Others are come to ſuch a prodigious height of impiety, that underſtanding men cannot but conclude they are nigh unto damnation; they ſpeak the very language, and have the very ſcent of hell upon them. Such are they that openly declare their ſin as Sodom, and glory in their ſhame.

Thus we ſee ſome drunkards will glory in their ſtrength, to pour down wine and ſtrong drink, and can boaſt of the number of their cups: ſome adulterers can glory in their acts of wickedneſs, not ſufficing themſelves to damn their own ſouls, but labouring to infect and corrupt as many as they can by their filthy tongues, that they may draw them into the ſame miſery. We can hardly tell how to ſcrew up ſin one peg higher than this: firſt to practiſe ſin, then defend it, then boaſt of it. Sin is firſt a man's burden, next his cuſtom, next his delight, and then his excellency. Lord, whither is man fallen! that holineſs ſhould ever be his diſgrace; and ſin, yea, the

vileſt of ſins, his glory! O the power of Divine patience!

3. *Inference.* If the eye of God ſearches every obſcure corner in the world, to behold the evil that is committed there, then certainly the eye of God cannot but look into every ſecret place in the world to ſee the good that is done there. "The eyes of the Lord are in "every place, beholding the evil and the good," Prov. xv. 3. The good as well as the evil; yea, he beholds with delight the good done in ſecret.

As ſome ſinners ſeek corners to act their wickedneſs in, and cannot ſatisfy themſelves to commit ſin in the light, (for, as our Saviour ſaith, John iii. 20. "He that doth evil hateth the light;") ſo, on the contrary, a truly godly man ſeeks corners to pray in, to meditate in, and to examine his own heart in, and thinks theſe duties of godlineſs can never be managed with too great a privacy; not that he is in the leaſt aſhamed of his duty; no, that is not the reaſon, but he is afraid of hypocriſy, when duties lie too open, and expoſed to the eyes of men. A ſinner takes his full liberty to vent his corruptions when he can do it in ſecret; and a ſaint takes his full liberty to vent and exerciſe his graces, when no eye but the eye of God ſees him. "Thou, when thou prayeſt (ſaith our Saviour) enter into thy cloſet, "and ſhut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and "thy Father (which ſeeth in ſecret) ſhall reward thee openly." O how much better is it, both as to your preſent comfort and future account, to get into a corner to pray, than to whore and drink? To pour out your ſouls to God graciouſly, than to pour out your luſts againſt God ſo wickedly? How contrary are the principles of grace and corruption? The ſtudy of ſinners is to hide their evils from the eyes of men: the ſtudy of a ſaint is to hide his duties from the eyes of men: The ſinner would not have the world ſuſpect what he hath been about; nor would the ſaint have all the world know what he hath been about. The way of an adulterer is as the "way of an "eagle in the air, or as a ſerpent upon a rock;" i. e. a ſecret way, where they leave no prints or tracts behind them. "So is the way of "an adulterous woman; ſhe eateth and wipeth her mouth, and "ſaith, I have done no wickedneſs," Prov xxx. 19, 20. By wiping the mouth is there meant preventing all ſuſpicion; ſuffering no ſign of the action to remain upon them: So, contrarily, a gracious perſon that hath been with God in ſecret prayer, or faſting, when his duty is ended, he labours to avoid all oſtentations. And therefore you have the caution from Chriſt, Matth. vi. 17, 18. "But thou, when "thou faſteſt, anoint thy head, and waſh thy face! that thou appear "not unto men to faſt, but unto thy father which is in ſecret." The meaning is, carry thy private duties ſo cloſe, that none may know what paſſeth between God and thee: When thou haſt been entertained in ſecret with hidden *manna*, a feaſt of fat things, wipe thy mouth in a holy ſenſe, i. e. wipe off all ſuſpicion of hypocriſy and vanity by a

prudent and humble concealment. * "Religion doth not lay all open, as we ſay:" As ſinners have their ſecret pleaſures, their ſtolen waters which are ſweet to them; ſo the ſaints have their ſecret delights in God, their hidden *manna*, which no man knows but he that eateth of it. And as the eye of God vindictively beholds the one, ſo it delightfully beholds the other; and ſo you find it, Cant. ii. 14. "O my dove, (ſaith Chriſt to the church) that art in the clifts of the "rocks, in the ſecret places of the ſtairs: Let me ſee thy counte-"nance, let me hear thy voice; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely." Let this encourage you to ſecret duties; let not others find more pleaſure in ſecret luſts, than you can do in God and ſecret duties.

4. *Inference.* Doth the eye of God ſee all the evil and wickedneſs that is committed in all the ſecret corners of the world! How admirable then is the patience of God towards the world! Who can imagine how much wickedneſs is ſecretly practiſed in a town or city every day? Or if all the villanies that are perpetrated in a ſmall circumference in one day were known to us, we ſhould admire that God doth not make us like Sodom, for judgment and deſolation before the next day. What then are the innumerable ſwarms of ſin, which are as the ſands upon the ſea-ſhore, from all the parts and corners of the earth! Alas, there is not the ten thouſandth part of the groſſer ſort of wickedneſſes committed in the world, that ever comes to our eye or ear; and if it did, we cannot eſtimate the evil of ſin, as God doth; nor feel with that reſentment the burden of it, as he doth: and yet the long-ſuffering God forbears it with infinite patience. Surely his power was not more diſcovered in making the world, than it is in forbearing to deſtroy it again for the wickedneſs that is in it. But the world ſtands for the church's ſake that is in it. "And were it "not that the Lord of hoſts had left us a ſmall remnant, we had "been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrha," Iſa. i. 9. There is alſo an elect remnant to be called and gathered by the goſpel out of it in their ſeveral generations: and when that number ſhall be accompliſhed, God will ſet fire to the four quarters of it, and it ſhall lie in white aſhes; till then the long-ſuffering of God waiteth.

5. *Inference.* If God ſees all the ſecret wickedneſs that is committed in every corner of the world; how clear is it that there is a judgment to come, and that this judgment will be exact?

That there is a judgment to come, is by this manifeſt; and alſo that there is abundance of ſin committed in the world, which never comes to light here, nor never will in this world. It is true, men's ſins are open; and the judgments of God upon them are as open; but it is not ſo with all. The apoſtle ſaith, 1 Tim. v. 24. "Some "men's ſins are open before-hand, going before-hand to judgment, "and ſome men's they follow after." Some men's ſins are written,

* *Non eſt religio ubi omnia patent.*

as it were, in their foreheads, every one ſees them; but others follow after, are not diſcovered till the day of the revelation of the ſecrets of all hearts, and then that which is now done in cloſets ſhall be proclaimed as upon houſe-tops: Though they were never put to ſhame for their ſins, in the places where they committed them, yet God will ſhame them before men and angels. This is the day to judge ſecrets, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

And, as it is certain there will be ſuch a judgment, ſo it is certain this judgment will be exact; for the judge of all hath ſeen all: Whatever he charges any man with, hath been acted before his face, Pſal. xc. 8. "Thou ſetteſt our ſecret ſins in the light of thy coun-"tenance." Here can be no miſtake, the omnipotent God will judge for what he hath ſeen; "For his eyes are upon the ways of "man, and he ſeeth all his goings, for he will not lay upon man "more than right, that he ſhould enter into judgment with God." The meaning is, he cannot miſtake in his judgment, being omniſcient, and having ſeen all the ways of man; ſo that there can be no plea offered by any man for a reverſe of his ſentence.

O then let us be exact and careful, as well in our ſecret as in our public actions; for God ſhall bring every work in judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccl. xii. *ult.*

6. *Inference.* Laſtly, If the eye of God be in every place upon us, and all our actions; then let thoſe whoſe condition of life hath ſent them out of the eyes and obſervations of their parents and maſters, keep the ſenſe of God's eye upon their hearts, as ever they would eſcape ſin and ruin.

It is no ſmall advantage to young unprincipled perſons, to live under the diſcipline of pious and careful governors; but it often falls out, that they are early tranſplanted into another ſoil, ſent into foreign countries in order to their education or employment; and as often are there corrupted and debauched by the evil examples of the places where they reſide; they learn another language, or drive another trade than what their parents or maſters deſigned them for. But if the ſenſe of this great truth might accompany them where-ever they are, O what a ſovereign antidote might it prove againſt thoſe deadly poiſons of temptations! This alone would be a ſufficient preſervative. If our children and ſervants have but the awful ſenſe of God's eye upon them, we may turn them looſe into the wide world without fear.

If Providence ſhall direct this diſcourſe to your hands, my heart's deſire and prayer for you is, that the Spirit of the Lord would imprint this great truth upon your hearts. And I am the more moved to endeavour your preſervation, upon the conſideration of the apparent danger you are in, and the manifold diſappointments and miſchiefs that muſt unavoidably follow the corrupting of your tender years. The danger you are in is great, whether you conſider,

*Firſt*, The infecting, catching nature of ſin. No plague is more infectious and inſinuating than ſin is. Many are the wiles, devices, ſtratagems, and baits, Satan lays to draw you into ſin, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Or,

*Secondly*, The proneneſs that is in your own nature, to cloſe with the offers and temptations that you are tried with; it is as great a wonder if you eſcape, as that one that lives in a peſt-houſe ſhould remain healthy; or that dry tinder ſhould not catch, when thouſands of ſparks fly about, and light upon it. Or,

*Thirdly*, The abſence of all thoſe means by which you have formerly been preſerved from ſin. You are now without the ordinances of God, the family duties, the admonitions, counſels, examples, and obſervations of your parents, maſters, and friends: All which have been of great uſe to keep you from ſin, and repreſs the vanities of youth. Or, Laſtly,

*Fourthly*, The manifold furtherance or temptations which your age afford; *Childhood and youth are vanity*. Inconſiderateneſs, raſhneſs, injudiciouſneſs, and the want of experience, do all caſt you into the very ſnare. See how the Holy Ghoſt hath ſignified the danger of perſons at your age, in Prov. vii. 7.

All theſe things do greatly endanger you. And if any, or all of them together, prevail to the vitiating and corrupting of you, then what a train of ſad conſequences will follow upon it! For,

1. The great God will be diſhonoured and reproached by you, even that God whoſe diſtinguiſhing mercies are now before your eyes, and ſhould be admired by you; that cauſed you to ſpring up in a better ſoil, and not from idolaters in a land of darkneſs.

2. Conſcience will be wounded and polluted with guilt; and though, at preſent, you feel not the remorſe and gnawings of it, yet now you are preparing for it. The ſins of youth are complaints and ſorrows of old age, Job xiii. 26.

3. The hearts of your friends, if godly, will be grieved and greatly troubled to find their expectations and hopes diſappointed; and all thoſe prayers for you, and counſels beſtowed on you to come to nothing. If an unequal match by Eſau was ſuch a grief of heart to Iſaac and Rebecca, what will profaneneſs and uncleanneſs be to your parents? Gen. xxvi. 34.

4. The ſerviceableneſs and comfort of your whole life, will, in all probability, be deſtroyed by the corruption of your youth. If bloſſoms be withered, and buds nipt, what fruit can be expected? To conclude,

5. Your precious and immortal ſouls are hazarded to all eternity. And "what ſhall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and loſe "his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?" Matth. xvi. 26.

All this miſchief may be happily prevented by the ſerious conſide-

ration of this point you have now been reading. For if God ſhall fix that truth in your hearts by faith, then,

*Firſt*, Inſtead of running with others into the ſame exceſs of riot, you will keep yourſelves pure and unſpotted in an unclean defiling world. You will anſwer all temptations to ſin, as Joſeph did, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt "God?"

*Secondly*, Inſtead of joining with others in ſin, you will mourn for the ſins of others. You will ſay with David, Pſal. cxx. 5. "Woe is "me, that I ſojourn in Meſhec, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" Your ſoul, like Lot's, will be vexed from day to day with the filthy converſations of the wicked, 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

*Thirdly*, Inſtead of returning to your country with a wounded name and conſcience, you will return full of inward comfort and peace, and to the joy of all your friends and relations.

*Fourthly*, To conclude, You will give fair encouragements to the expectations of all that know you, of becoming uſeful inſtruments of the glory of God, and benefit of the world in your generation. O therefore beg of God that this truth may be deeply engraven upon your hearts.

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THE

# SUCCESSFUL SEAMAN.

## SERMON IV.

DEUT. viii. 17, 18.

*And thou ſay in thine heart, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; but thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.*

THIS context contains a neceſſary and very ſeaſonable caution to the Iſraelites, who were now paſſing out of their wilderneſs ſtraits into the rich and fruitful land of Canaan, which abounded with all earthly bleſſings and comforts. Now, when the Lord was about to give them poſſeſſion of this good land, he firſt gives them ſome wholeſome caveats to prevent the abuſe of theſe mercies. He knew how apt they were to forget him in a proſperous eſtate, and aſcribe all their comfortable fruitions to their own prudence and valour: to prevent this, he reminds them of their former eſtate, and warns them about their future eſtate: he reminds them of their former condition, whilſt they ſubſiſted upon his immediate care in the wilderneſs; verſes 15, 16. "Who led them through the great and terrible wil-

" derneſs, wherein were fiery ſerpents and ſcorpions, and drought, " where there was no water:" here were their dangers and wants. " Who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint, who fed " thee in the wilderneſs with manna, which thy fathers knew not:" here were their ſupplies in theſe ſtraits. " That he might humble " thee, and that he might prove thee to do thee good at thy latter " end:" here was the wiſe and gracious deſign of God in all this.

But wherein did God humble them by feeding them with manna? Were they not ſhrewdly humbled (ſaith Mr Gurnal, vol. II. p. 345. an ingenious author) to be fed with ſuch a dainty diſh, which had God for its cook, and was called angels food for its delicacy? It was not the meanneſs of the fare, but the manner of having it, by which God intended to humble them. The food was excellent, but they had it from hand to mouth; ſo that God kept the key of their cupboard, they ſtood to his immediate allowance: this was an humbling way. But now the diſpenſation of Providence was juſt upon the change; they were going to a land, " where they ſhould eat bread " without ſcarceneſs," verſe 9. and have their comforts in a more " natural, ſtated, and ſenſible way; and now would be the danger. Therefore,

He not only reminds them of their former eſtate, but in this text cautions them about their future eſtate, "Say not in thy heart, my " power, or the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth," &c. In this caution we have theſe two things eſpecially to obſerve:

I. The falſe cauſe of their proſperity removed.

II. The true and proper cauſe thereof aſſerted.

1. The falſe cauſe removed: " Not their power, or the might of " their hand." That is ſaid to be gotten by the hand, which is gotten by our wiſdom, as well as labour: head-work, and wit-work, are hand-work in the ſenſe of this text. It cannot be denied but they were a great people, prudent, induſtrious, and had an excellent polity among them: but yet, though they had all theſe natural external means of enriching themſelves in that fertile ſoil, God will, by no means, allow them to aſcribe their ſucceſs and wealth to any of theſe cauſes: for, alas! what are all theſe without his bleſſing?

2. The true and proper cauſe aſſerted: " It is the Lord that gives " thee power to get wealth:" i. e. All thy care, labour, wiſdom, ſtrength, ſignify nothing without him; it is not your pains, but his bleſſing, that makes your deſigns to proſper: and therefore in all your proſperity, ſtill acknowledge him as the Author of all. Hence note,

Doct. *That the proſperity and ſucceſs of our affairs are not to be aſcribed to our own abilities, but to the bleſſing of God upon our lawful endeavours.*

We find two proverbs, in one chapter, that ſeem to differ in the account they give of this matter; and indeed they do but ſeem ſo. It is ſaid, Prov. x. 4. " The hand of the diligent maketh rich;" aſcribing riches and proſperity to human diligence. And verſe 22

« The bleſſing of the Lord it maketh rich." But theſe two are not really oppoſed to each other, but the one ſubordinated to the other. The diligent hand, with God's bleſſing upon it, makes rich; neither of them alone, but both conjoined. A diligent hand cannot make rich without God's bleſſing; and God's bleſſing doth not ordinarily make rich without a diligent hand. And theſe two are put together in their proper places, 1 Chron. xxii. 16. « Up and be doing, and the Lord be with « you." It is a vain pretence for any man to ſay, If the Lord be with me, I may ſit ſtill, and do nothing; and a wicked one to ſay, If I am up and doing, I ſhall proſper whether God be with me or not. The ſluggard would fain proſper without diligence, and the atheiſt hopes to proſper by his diligence alone: but Chriſtians expect their proſperity from God's bleſſing, in the way of honeſt diligence.

*Faith muſt not ſtifle induſtry, nor induſtry blind faith.*

It is a common thing for men to benumb their own arms, and make them as dead and uſeleſs by leaning too much upon them: ſo it is in a moral as well as a natural way: all the prudence and pains in the world avail nothing without God. So ſaith the Pſalmiſt, in Pſal. cxxvii. 2. « It is in vain for you to riſe up early, to ſit up late, « to eat the bread of ſorrow, for ſo he giveth his beloved ſleep."

A man would think, he that riſes betimes fares hard, works hard, ſits up late, cannot but be a thriving man; and probably he would be ſo, if God's bleſſing did ſecond his diligence and frugality. But the Pſalmiſt intends it of diligence in a ſeparate ſenſe; a diligent hand working alone, and then it is all in vain, and ſerves only to confirm the common proverb—*Early up and never the nearer.* Labour without God cannot proſper; and labour againſt God will not only deſtroy itſelf, but the labourer too.

Now, that this is really ſo as the doctrine ſtates it, I ſhall endeavour to make evident.

1. By a general demonſtration of the whole matter.

2. By a particular enumeration of the ordinary cauſes and means of all ſucceſs, which are all dependent upon the Lord's bleſſing.

*Firſt*, That ſucceſs in buſineſs is not in the power of our hand, but in the hand of Providence to diſpoſe it as he pleaſes, and to whom he pleaſes, appears by this, 'That Providence ſometimes blaſts and 'fruſtrates the moſt prudent and well-laid deſigns of men; and in 'the mean time ſucceeds and proſpers more weak and improbable 'ones.' What is more common in the obſervation of all ages than this? One man ſhall toil as in the fire, for very vanity; run to and fro, plot and ſtudy all the ways in the world to get an eſtate, deny back and belly, and all will not do: he ſhall never be able to attain what he ſtrives after, but his deſigns ſhall be ſtill fruitleſs. Another hath neither a head to contrive, nor a hand to labour as the former hath: nor doth he torture his brains about it, but manages his affairs

with leſs judgment, and ſpends fewer thoughts about it, and yet ſucceſs follows it. It ſhall be caſt in upon ſome, who as they did not, ſo, conſidering the weak management of their buſineſs, had little rational encouragement to expect it; and fly from others, who induſtriouſly purſue it in the prudent choice and diligent uſe of all the proper means of attaining it. And this is not only an obſervation grounded upon our own experience, but confirmed by the wiſeſt of men; Eccleſ. ix. 11. "I returned, and ſaw under the ſun, that the "race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong; neither yet "bread to the wiſe, nor yet riches to men of underſtanding, nor yet "favour to men of ſkill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." If two men run for a prize, reaſon gives the prize to the ſwifteſt: if two armies join battle, reaſon gives the victory to the ſtrongeſt: if two men undertake a deſign to get wealth, reaſon gives the riches to the wiſeſt; yea, but Providence ſometimes diſpoſes it quite contrary to the verdict of reaſon, and the prize is given to the ſloweſt, the victory to the weakeſt, the eſtate to the more ſhallow capacity; ſo that theſe events ſeem to fall out rather caſually than anſwerably to the means employed about them. And who that obſerves this, can doubt but it is the hand of God's providence, and not our diligence that diſpoſes the iſſues of theſe things? For why doth God ſo often ſtep out of the ordinary way, and croſs his hands, as old Iſrael did, laying the right hand upon the younger, and the left upon the elder: I mean, give ſucceſs to the weak, and diſappointment to the ſtrong, but to convince us of this great truth which I here bring it to confirm? And becauſe men are ſo apt to ſacrifice to their own prudence, and diſown providence, therefore it ſometimes makes the caſe much plainner than ſo: it denies riches to the induſtrious, that live for no other end but to get them, and caſts them in upon thoſe that ſeek them not at all, and indeed are ſcarcely competent for buſineſs. Ariſtides, one of the wiſeſt men of his age, was yet ſtill ſo poor, that Plutarch ſaid, it brought a ſlur upon juſtice herſelf, as if ſhe were not able ot maintain her followers. Socrates, one of the prime Grecian ſages, was ſo exceeding poor, that Apuleius could not but note, "That "*poverty* was become an inmate with *philoſophy**;" when in the mean time, the empty, ſhallow, and fooliſh, ſhall come up with it, and overtake it without any pains at all, which others proſecute in the moſt rational courſe all their life, and all to no purpoſe. Thus it was noted of pope Clement V. *None more rich, none more fooliſh.* † And this is the ground of that proverb, *Fortuna favet fatiis: Fortune favours fools.* Though the author of that proverb, in nick-naming providence, ſhewed as little wiſdom as he that is the ſubject of it.

By all which, this point is in the general made good: it is not induſtry, but providence, that directs and commands the ſucceſs of

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* *Paupertas eſt philoſophica vernacula.*

† *Epitom. Hiſt. Gallic.*

buſineſs: It being much in the attaining of riches, as the apoſtle ſaith it is in the obtaining of righteouſneſs: "The Gentiles, which fol-"lowed not after righteouſneſs, have attained to righteouſneſs; but "Iſrael, which followed after the law of righteouſneſs, hath not at-"tained to the law of righteouſneſs," Rom ix. 30, 31. So it is here, for the vindication of the honour of providence, which men would ſcarcely own, if it did not thus baffle them ſometimes: they that follow the world cannot obtain it; and they attain it that follow it not; that all men may ſee their good is not in their own hand; and leſt man, who is not only a covetous creature, and would engroſs all to himſelf, but as proud as covetous, ſhould aſcribe all to himſelf. But this will farther appear,

*Secondly*, By a particular enumeration of the ordinary cauſes and means of all ſucceſs in buſineſs, which are all dependent things upon a higher cauſe.

Now, if we proceed upon a rational acccount, we ſhall find five things required to the ſucceſs of our affairs: and that I may ſpeak to your capacity, I will inſtance in that affair of merchandizing in which you are employed, as the hands that execute what the heads of your merchants contrive; and will ſhew you, that neither their wiſdom in contriving, nor your ſkill and induſtry in managing their deſigns, can proſper without the leave and bleſſing of Divine Providence. Let us therefore conſider what is neceſſary to the raiſing of an eſtate in that way of employment; and you will find, that in a rational and ordinary way, ſucceſs cannot be expected, unleſs,

1. The deſigns and projects be prudently laid, and moulded with much conſideration and foreſight. An error here is like an error in the firſt concoction, which is not to be rectified afterwards. "The "wiſdom of the prudent (ſaith Solomon) is to underſtand his way;" that is, to underſtand, and thoroughly to conſider, the particular deſigns and buſineſs in which he is to engage. Raſhneſs and inconſiderateneſs here hath been the ruin of many thouſand enterprizes. And if a deſign be never ſo well laid, yet,

2. No ſucceſs in buſineſs can be rationally expected, except there be an election of proper inſtruments to manage it. The beſt laid deſign in the world may be ſpoiled by an ill management. If the perſons employed be either incapable or unfaithful, what but trouble and diſappointment can be expected? "He that ſendeth a meſſage "(ſaith Solomon) by the hands of a fool, cutteth off the legs, and "drinketh damage." It is as if a man ſhould ſend him on his buſineſs that had no legs to go; i. e. one that is incompetent for the buſineſs he is employed about. All that a man ſhall reap from ſuch a deſign is damage: and if the inſtrument employed be never ſo capable, yet if he be not alſo faithful to the truſt committed to him, all is loſt; and ſuch is the depth of deceit in the hearts of men, that few or none can be ſecured againſt it. Solomon was the wiſeſt of men, and yet fatally miſcarried in this matter; "He ſeeing the young man

" (Jeroboam) that he was a mighty man of valour, and that he was " induſtrious, made him ruler over all the charge of the houſe of " Joſeph," 1 Kings xi. 28. And this was the man that rent the kingdom from his ſon, even ten tribes from the houſe of David. And yet,

3. Let deſigns be projected with the greateſt prudence, and committed to the management of the fitteſt inſtruments; all is nothing as to ſucceſs, without the concurrence of health, ſtrength, favourable winds, ſecurity from the hands of enemies, and perils of the deep. If any of theſe be wanting, the deſign miſcarries, and all our projects fail. How often are hopeful and thriving undertakings fruſtrated by the failure of any one of theſe requiſites? " Go to now, ye that ſay, " to-day or to-morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and remain there " a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain; whereas ye know not " what ſhall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even a " vapour that appears for a little while, and then vaniſheth away," Jam. iv. 13, 14. How ſoon are the purpoſes of men's hearts broken off, and their thoughts periſh in one day? They think to ſend or go to ſuch a place, and there enrich themſelves, and return proſperous; but ſometimes death, ſometimes captivity, ſometimes croſs winds, daſh all their hopes.

4. Proper ſeaſons muſt be obſerved, elſe all ſucceſs and expectation of increaſe is loſt. " There is (ſaith Solomon) a ſeaſon for every " thing, and a time to every purpoſe under the ſun," Eccleſ. iii. 1. This being taken, gives facility and ſpeedy diſpatch to a buſineſs; and therefore he gives this reaſon, why man miſcarries ſo frequently, and is diſappointed in his enterprizes becauſe he knows not the time; Eccleſ. ix. 11. 'He comes (as one ſaith) when the bird is flown." It is a wiſe and weighty proverb with the Greeks, 'That there is much 'time in a ſhort opportunity:" That is, a man hitting the ſeaſon of a buſineſs, may do more in a day, than, loſing it, he may be able to do in a year. This is of a ſpecial conſideration in all human affairs, and is the very hinge upon which ſucceſs turns: So that to come before, is to pluck apples before they are ripe; and to come after it, is to ſeek them when they are fallen and periſhed.

5. Laſtly, In getting wealth the leaks of our eſtates muſt be ſtopped: elſe we do but put it into a bag with holes, as the prophet's phraſe is in Hag. i. 9. If a man loſe as much one way as he gets another, there can be no increaſe. Hence it is, that many are kept low and poor all their days: If one deſign proſpers, yet another miſcarries; or, if all ſucceed well abroad, yet there is a ſecret conſumption of it home, by prodigality, riot, luxury, or a ſecret curſe upon it, which the ſcripture calls *God's blowing upon it*, Hag. i. 3. If therefore by any of theſe ways our gains moulder away, we do but diſquiet ourſelves in vain, and labour in the fire for very vanity. Thus you ſee what things are requiſite to the advancement of an eſtate upon a prudential account.

Now let us particularly obſerve what a dependence there is upon Providence in all theſe things; and then it will be clear that our good is not in our hand, nor ſucceſs at our beck, but it is the Lord that gives us power to get wealth. For,

As to the moulding and projecting of a deſign, we may ſay, both of the prudent merchant and ingenious ſeaman, what the prophet doth of the huſbandman, Iſa. xxviii. 10. "It is his God that in-"ſtructs him to diſcretion, and teacheth him." There is, indeed, a ſpirit in man, "But it is the inſpiration of the Almighty that giveth "underſtanding," Job xxxii. 8. The faculty is man's, but the light of wiſdom, whether natural or ſpiritual, is God's: and the natural faculty is of itſelf no more capable of directing us in our affairs, without his teaching, than the dial is to inform us of hours without the ſun's ſhining upon it. And becauſe men are ſo dull in apprehending, and backward in acknowledging it, but will lean to their own underſtandings, thence it is that prudent deſigns are ſo often blaſted, and weaker ones ſucceeded.

And no leſs doth Providence manifeſt itſelf in directing to, and proſpering the means and inſtruments employed in our buſineſs: it is of the Lord that they prove ingenious, active and faithful ſervants to us; that your factors abroad prove not malefactors to you; that every deſign is not ruined by the negligence, ignorance, or treachery of them that manage it. If God qualify men to be fit inſtruments to ſerve you, and then providentially direct you to them, his hand is thankfully to be owned in both. It was no ſmall mercy to Abraham, that he had ſo diſcreet, pious, and faithful a ſervant to manage even his weightieſt affairs ſo prudently and proſperouſly for him. Laban, Pharaoh, and Jethro, never ſo proſpered, as when Jacob, Joſeph, and Moſes, had the charge of their buſineſs. Laban ingenuouſly acknowledged, "That he had learned by experience that the Lord had bleſſed "him for Jacob's ſake," Gen. xxx. 27. A heathen you ſee is more ingenuous in owning the mercy of God to him in this caſe, than many profeſſed Chriſtians are, who ſacrifice all to their own net, and burn incenſe to their drag, i. e. idolize the means and inſtruments of their proſperity, and ſee nothing of God in it.

And then as to the preſervation of thoſe that go down into the ſea, to do our buſineſs in the great waters; who can but acknowledge this to be the peculiar work of God? Doth not daily experience ſhew how often poor ſeamen are cut off in the proſecution of our deſigns, ſometimes by ſickneſs, ſometimes by ſtorms, and ſometimes by enemies, to whom they become a prey? If they eſcape all theſe, yet how often do they lie wind-bound, or hindered by croſs accidents, till the proper ſeaſon be over, and the deſign loſt? Certainly, if providence ſhall ſo far favour men, as to prevent all theſe; command winds fit for their purpoſe, reſtrain enemies, preſerve life, and carry them ſafely and ſeaſonably to their ports, it deſerves a thankful ac-

knowledgment; and thoſe that do not acknowledge providence, do diſoblige it.

*Laſtly*, Who is it that ſtops the leaks in your eſtates, prevents the waſting of your ſubſtance, and ſecures to you what you poſſeſs? Is it not the Lord? How many fair eſtates moulder away inſenſibly, and come to nothing! Certainly, as there is a ſecret bleſſing in ſome families, ſo that themſelves can ſcarce give any account how they are provided for, ſo there is a ſecret blaſt and conſumption upon others, which brings poverty upon them like an armed man. And this is the true ſenſe of that ſcripture, Hag. i. 6. "Ye have ſown much, and "bring in little. Ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but are "not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but are not warm; and he "that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes;" or, as in the Hebrew, a *bag pierced, or bored through*; what goes in at one end, goes out at another, and ſo all labour is loſt; nothing ſtays with them to do them good. So that it is an undeniable truth, that *proſperity* and *ſucceſs* are not to be aſcribed to our abilities, but to the bleſſing of God upon our lawful endeavours.

1. *Inference.* And if ſo, how are they juſtly reprovable, that wholly depend upon means in the neglect of providence; that never eye God, nor acknowledge him in any of their ways? This is a very great evil, and highly provoking to the Lord: it is the fruit and diſcovery of the natural Atheiſm of the hearts of men. How confident are men of ſucceſs and proſperity, when ſecond cauſes lie for it, and ſmile upon them? And, on the contrary, how dejected and heartleſs when they ſeem to lie croſs to their hopes? O how few conſider and believe that great truth, Eccl. ix. 1. "That the righteous, and the "wiſe, and their works are in the hand of God!" To be in the hand of God, noteth both their ſubjection to his power, and to his directive providence. Whether your works be in your hand, or put out of your hand, they always are in God's hand to proſper or fruſtrate them at his pleaſure.

Fooliſh man decreeth events without the leave of Providence: as if he were abſolute lord of his own actions, and their ſucceſs. Indeed, you may then ſpeak of ſucceſs, when you have aſked God's leave; Job xxii. 28. "Acquaint thyſelf with God, then ſhalt thou decree a "thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed." But your confidence in the means, whilſt God is neglected, will ſurely be followed either with a diſappointment or a curſe. For what is this but to labour without God, yea, to labour againſt God? For ſo do all they that give the glory of God to the creature; that ſet the inſtrumental and ſubordinate in the place of the principal efficient cauſe. It is juſt with God to deny you your comfort in thoſe things wherein you rob him of his glory.

2. *Inference.* How vain and unreaſonable are the proud boaſts of men, in the midſt of their ſucceſſes and proſperity! If God be the ſole author of it, and it is not in your power, nor the might of your

hand, that hath gotten you this wealth; why do you glory in it, as if it were the effect and fruit of your own prudence and induſtry? How ſoon do the ſpirits of men riſe with their eſtates? How haughtily do they look? How proudly do they ſpeak? What a ſenſible change of temper doth this ſmall change of condition work? it is an exceeding hard thing to keep down the heart when providence exalteth a man's eſtate. *Magnæ fælicitatis eſt, a fælicitate non vinci*, ſaith Auſtin, It is a great felicity not to be overcome by felicity. That man is ſurely rich in grace, whoſe graces ſuffer no eclipſe by his riches. It is as hard to be proſperous and humble, as to be afflicted and cheerful. But to keep down thy heart in times of ſucceſs and proſperity, I will offer thee, reader, a few humbling conſiderations about this matter.

1. And the firſt is this: Though providence do ſucceed and proſper thy earthly deſigns, yet this is no argument at all of the love of God to thy ſoul: thou mayeſt be the object of his hatred and wrath for all this. No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him, Eccl. ix. 1. How weak an evidence for heaven muſt that be, which millions now in hell have had in a greater meaſure than you have? The leaſt drachm of grace is a better pledge of happineſs, than the greateſt ſum of gold and ſilver that ever lay in any man's treaſury. Externals diſtinguiſh not internals; you cannot ſo much as gueſs what a man's ſpiritual eſtate is, by the view of his temporal. Iſhmael was a very great man, the head of a princely family, but, for all that, excluded from the covenant, and all its ſpiritual bleſſings, Gen. xvii. 20, 21. He that reads the lxxiii. Pſalm, and the xxi. of Job, will plainly ſee how wretched a caſe that man is in, who hath no better evidence for the love of God than this amounts to.

2. Be not proud of outward proſperity and ſucceſs; for providences are very changeable in theſe things; yea, it daily rings the changes all the world over. Many a greater eſtate than yours, and every way as well, yea, far better ſecured to the eye of reaſon, hath he ſcattered in a moment. It is the ſaying of a philoſopher, ſpeaking of the eſtates of merchants and ſeamen, *Non amo fælicitatem e funibus pendentem*; I like not that happineſs that hangs upon ropes. I need not here cite *hiſtories* to confirm this truth: there is none of you but can abundantly confirm it to yourſelves, if you will but recollect thoſe inſtances and examples which have fallen within your time and remembrance. It is a poor happineſs that may leave a man more miſerable to-morrow, than he that never arrived to what you have, can be.

3. Pride not yourſelves in your ſucceſs; for as providences are very changeable, ſo the change ſeems very nigh to you, when your heart is thus lifted up, eſpecially if you be ſuch, to whoſe eternal happineſs God hath any ſpecial regard: to be ſure he will pull down that proud heart, and quickly order humbling providences to that end: "He "looketh upon every one that is proud, to abaſe him," Job xl. 11. The heart of good Hezekiah was tickled with vain-glory, and he muſt needs ſhew the king of Babylon's ſervants all his treaſures, and pre-

cious things; and at that time came the prophet Iſaiah to him with a ſad meſſage from the Lord, that all theſe treaſures, in which he had gloried, muſt be carried to Babylon, Iſa. xxxix. If you hope comfortably to enjoy the good of providence, provoke it not by ſuch vain oſtentations. It is an ingenious note, even of an heathen,

*Tu quoque fac timeas, et quæ tibi læta videntur,*
*Dum loqueris, fieri triſtia poſſe, puta.* Ovid.

Exerciſe fear in proſperity, and think with thyſelf, when thy heart is moſt affected with it, that whilſt the boaſt is in thy lips, the ſcene may alter, and thy happineſs be turned into ſorrow. Whilſt that proud boaſt was in the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, the voice from heaven told him, "His kingdom was departed from him, Dan. iv. 30, 31. Pride ſhews, that proſperity, which feeds it, to be at its vertical point.

3. *Inference.* If ſucceſs in buſineſs be from the Lord, then certainly the true way to proſperity is to commend our affairs to God by prayer. He takes the true way to thrive, that engages God's bleſſing upon his endeavours. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt "alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs," Pſal. xxxvii. 4. It is a vile thing for any man to grudge that time that is ſpent in prayer, as ſo much time loſt in his buſineſs. But having preſſed this point before, I ſhall add no more here.

4. *Inference.* Doth all ſucceſs and proſperity depend upon, and come from God? Then let it be faithfully employed to his glory. "If it be of him, and through him," then there is all the reaſon in the world it ſhould "be to him," Rom. xi. 36. You do but give him of his own, as David ſpeaks: "All this ſtore cometh of thine hand, "and is thine own," 1 Chron. xxix. 16. He never intended your eſtates for the gratifying of your luſts, but to give you a larger capacity thereby of honouring him in the uſe of them. O conſider, when God hath proſpered your eſtates abroad, and you return ſucceſsfully home, how you have an opportunity of honouring God, and evidenceing your ſenſe of his goodneſs to you, by relieving the poor with a liberal and cheerful charity; by encouraging the goſpel, and making them partakers of your good things, who labour for your ſouls, and diſpenſe better things to you than you can return to them. I would not here be miſ-interpreted, as though I pleaded my own intereſt, under a pretence of pleading God's; no! God forbid; I am well ſatisfied with a capacity of doing any good, how little ſoever I receive; nor can many of you reap the fruit of my labours: but I would not leave you ignorant, or regardleſs of ſo great and plain a duty as this is: you are bound to this retribution, by a plain and poſitive precept, Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the word, com-"municate to him that teacheth, in all good things." You are obliged to do it, proportionably to the ſucceſs God gives you in your trade, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And when you have ſo done, not to think it

any great matter, 1 Cor. ix. 11. but the diſcharge of a plain and neceſſary duty.

5. *Inference.* Let not your hearts be ſatisfied with all the ſucceſs and increaſe of the world, except your ſouls thrive as well as your bodies, and your eternal concerns proſper as well as your temporal. It was a pious wiſh of St John for Gaius his hoſt, "That he might "proſper, and be in health, even as his ſoul proſpered," 3 Epiſt. John, ver. 2. But it were to be wiſhed, that your ſouls did but proſper as your bodies and eſtates do. It is a poor comfort to have an increaſing eſtate, and a dead and declining ſoul. When a conſiderable preſent was ſent to Luther, he earneſtly proteſted, God ſhould not put him off with theſe things. O friends! I beſeech you take not up in theſe enjoyments!

6. *Inference. Laſtly,* If God be the author of all your ſucceſs, how prodigious an evil is it to make your proſperity an inſtrument of diſhonouring him that gave it; to abuſe the eſtates providence gives you, to rioting and drunkenneſs? Do you thus requite the Lord! is this the thanks you give him for all his care over you! and kindneſs to you! you would never be able to bear that from another, which God bears from you. If God do you good, O do not return him evil for it!

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THE

# DISAPPOINTED SEAMAN.

## SERMON V.

LUKE v. 5.

*Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.*

THESE words are the reply made by Peter unto Chriſt, who, in the former verſe, had commanded him to "launch out in-"to the deep, and let down the nets for a draught." Peter is diſcouraged as to any farther attempt at that time, having already taken ſo much pains to ſo little purpoſe: "We have (ſaith he) toiled "all the night, and have taken nothing." In which reply we note theſe two things:

1. The great pains he and his company had taken in their honeſt calling and employment to get a livelihood; "We have toiled all the "night." No calling more lawful, no diligence in an honeſt employment could be greater; not only to ſpend the night, when other la-

bourers take their reſt, in watching, but in toiling. The * word κοπιωσαντες comes from a verb that ſignifies *waſting, tiring, ſpending, labour.* Here was great diligence, even to the wearying and waſting of their ſpirits: "They toiled, and that all the night."

2. The unſucceſsfulneſs and fruitleſsneſs of their labours, they *caught nothing.* Though their deſign was honeſt, and their induſtry great, yet it ſucceeded not according to their deſire and expectations: it proved but loſt labour and pains to no purpoſe. Hence the note will be,

Doct. *That God ſometimes fruſtrates and blaſts the moſt diligent labours of men, in their juſt and lawful callings.*

What employment more honeſt, or laborious, than that of the huſbandman, who eats his bread in the ſweat of his brow, and ſuſtains all that ſpending toil and labour, by an expectation of fruit in the ſeaſon? And yet ſometimes it ſo falls out, that after all his labours and hopes, he reaps nothing but ſhame and diſappointment. Joel i. 11. "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye huſbandmen: Howl, O ye vine-"dreſſers, for the wheat, and for the barley, becauſe the harveſt of "the field is periſhed."

The employment of the mariner is as lawful as it is beneficial; what he gets, is gotten with imminent hazard of life and liberty, as well as watchings and labours; and yet it ſo falls out, ſometimes, that they labour but for the wind, and ſpend their ſtrength for very vanity: God cuts off their expectations and lives together. There is a time when they return rich and proſperous, and a time when they either return empty, or return no more. So it was with Tyre, that renowned mart, and famous empory; the flouriſhing and fall of whoſe trade you have in Ezek. xxvii. 33. 34. "When thy wares "went forth out of the ſeas, thou filledſt many people; thou didſt "enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches, and "of thy merchandiſe." Here was their proſperity and ſucceſs; but will this day always laſt? Shall the ſun of their proſperity never ſet? No; the change was at hand; for in the next verſe the ſcene alters. "In the day when thou ſhalt be broken by the ſeas, in the depths "of the waters, thy merchandiſe, and all thy company in the "midſt of thee, ſhall fall."

Now if we ſearch into the grounds and reaſons of theſe diſappointments by the hand of providence, we ſhall find them reducible to a threefold cauſe and reaſon.

1. The ſovereign pleaſure of God ſo diſpoſes it.
2. The good of the people of God requires it.
3. The manifold ſins of men in their callings provoke it.

*Firſt,* The ſovereign pleaſure of God ſo diſpoſes it. He is the Rector of the univerſe, and as ſuch will ſtill aſſert his dominion. It is his pleaſure to eſtabliſh this order in the world, to exalt ſome, and

* Κοπιω ſignifies when one lies down wearied at the end of his work.

depreſs others; to ſet ſome above, and others below: all muſt not be rich and great, but ſome muſt be poor and low, and to theſe ends providences are ſuited: On ſome it ſmiles, on others it frowns: 1 Sam. ii. 7. "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bring-"eth low, and lifteth up." And certainly there is much of Divine wiſdom ſhining forth in this ordination and diſpoſition of perſons and their conditions. If providence had alike proſpered every man's deſigns, and ſet them upon a level, there had been no occaſion to exerciſe the rich man's charity, or the poor man's patience. Nay, without frequent diſappointments, providence itſelf would ſcarcely be owned in ſucceſſes, nor theſe ſucceſſes be half ſo ſweet to them that receive them, as now they are. The very beauty of providence conſiſts much in theſe various and contrary effects: So that with reſpect to the infinite Wiſdom which governs the world, it is neceſſary ſome ſhould be croſſed, and others proſper in their deſigns.

*Secondly*, And if we conſider the gracious ends and deſigns of God towards his own people, it appears needful that all of them, in ſome things, and many of them in moſt things (relating to their outward condition in this world) ſhould be fruſtrated in their expectations and contrivances. For if all things here ſhould ſucceed according to their wiſh, and a conſtant tide of proſperity ſhould attend them,

1. How ſoon would ſenſuality and earthlineſs invade their hearts and affections? Much proſperity, like the pouring in of much wine, intoxicates, and overcomes our weak heads and hearts*. Earthly, as well as heavenly objects, have a transforming efficacy in them; there cannot but be much danger in thoſe earthly things that give or promiſe us much delight. Can a Chriſtian keep his heart as looſe from the ſmiling, as from the frowning world? We little think how deeply it inſinuates into our affections in the day of proſperity; but when adverſity comes, then we find it.

2. How ſoon would it eſtrange them from their God, and interrupt their communion with him? He is certainly a very mortified and heavenly Chriſtian, whoſe walk with God ſuffers no interruption by the multitude of earthly affairs, eſpecially when they are proſperous. When Iſrael was ſettled in the midſt of the riches and delights of Canaan, then ſay they, (even to their Benefactor, the Author of all their proſperity) "We are lords, we will come no more to thee," Jer. ii. 31. Or, if it do not wholly interrupt their communion, yet ſecretly deſtroys and waſtes the vigour, life, and ſweetneſs of it. So that Divine Wiſdom ſees it neceſſary to croſs and diſappoint them in the world, to prevent the miſchievous influences that proſperity would have upon their duties. He had rather you ſhould miſs your deſired comforts in theſe things, than that he ſhould miſs that delightful fellowſhip with you, which he ſo deſires.

3. How loth ſhould we be to leave this world, if conſtant ſucceſs and

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* *Luxuriant animi rebus plerumque ſecundis.* In proſperous times, our mind oft wanton grows.

proſperity ſhould follow our affairs and deſigns here? we ſee that notwithſtanding all the cares, fears, ſorrows, croſſes, wants, and diſappointments we meet with from year to year, and from day to day; yet we are apt to hug the world in our boſoms. As bitter as it is, we court it, admire it, and zealouſly proſecute it. We cling to it, and are loth to leave it, though we have little reſt or comfort in it. What could we do then, if it ſhould anſwer our expectation and deſires? If we graſp with pleaſure a thorn that pierces and wounds us; what would we do if it were a roſe that had nothing but delight and pleaſure in it?

*Thirdly*, And as diſappointments fall out as the effects of ſovereign pleaſure, and are ordered as preventive means of ſuch miſchief, which proſperity would occaſion to the people of God; ſo it comes as a righteous retribution and puniſhment of the many evils that are committed in our trading and dealings with men. It is a hard thing to have much buſineſs paſs through our hands, and no iniquity cleave to them and defile them. If God be provoked againſt us by our iniquities, wonder not that things go croſs to our deſires and hopes. God may ſuffer ſome men to proſper in their wickedneſs, and others to miſcarry in their juſt and righteous enterprizes; but ordinarily we find that crying ſins are remarkably puniſhed, ſooner or later, with viſible judgments. So that if others do not, yet we ourſelves may obſerve the relation that ſuch a judgment bears to ſuch a ſin.

And, from among many, I will here ſelect theſe following evils, which have deſtroyed the eſtates and hopes of many.

(1.) Irreligious and atheiſtical neglect and contempt of God and his worſhip, eſpecially in thoſe that have been enlightened, and made profeſſion of religion. This was the ſin which brought that blaſting judgment upon the eſtates and labours of the Jews, as the prophet Haggai tells them, chap. i. ver. 2, 4, 6, 9. compared; "They neglected the houſe of God," i. e. were careleſs and regardleſs of his worſhip, and, in the mean time, were wholly intent upon their own houſes and intereſts, as he tells them in ver. 2, 4. And what was the iſſue of this? Why, ruin to all their earthly comforts and deſigns. So he tells them, ver. 6, 9 "Ye have ſown much, "and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but "ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none "warm; and he that earneth wages, doth it to put it into a bag with "holes. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when "ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, ſaith the Lord of "hoſts? Becauſe of mine houſe that is waſte; and ye turn every "man unto his own houſe." Here are great and manifold diſappointments of their hopes, a curſe, a blaſt upon all they took in hand; and the procuring cauſe of all this was their eager proſecution of the world, in a careleſs diſregard of God and his ſervice.

(2.) Injuſtice and fraud is a blaſting ſin. A little unjuſt gain mingled with a great eſtate, will conſume it like a moth. The Spirit

of God hath uſed a very lively ſimilitude to repreſent to us the miſchievous effects of this ſin upon all human diligence and induſtry. Jer. xvii. 11. "As the partridge ſitteth upon eggs, and hatcheth them "not; ſo he that getteth riches, and not by right, ſhall leave "them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool."

Unjuſt gain, how long ſoever men ſit brooding upon it, ſhall after all their ſedulity and expectation, turn to no other account than a fowl's ſitting upon a neſt of addle-eggs uſes to do: if ſhe ſit till ſhe have pined away herſelf to death, nothing is produced.

You think you conſult the intereſt of your families herein, but the Lord tells you, "That you conſult ſhame to your houſes," Hab. ii. 10. This is not the way to *feather*, but to *fire* your neſt. A quiet conſcience is infinitely better than a full purſe; one diſh of wholeſome, though coarſer food, is better than an hundred delicate, but poiſoned diſhes. If a man have eaten the beſt food in the world, and afterwards ſips but a little poiſon, he loſeth not only the benefit and comfort of that which was good, but his life or health to boot. It may be, you have gotten much honeſtly; what pity is it all this good ſhould be deſtroyed for the ſake of a little gotten diſhoneſtly? This is the reaſon why ſome men cannot proſper.

(3.) Oppreſſion is a blaſting ſin to ſome men's eſtates and employments. It is a crying ſin in the ears of the Lord, and ordinarily intails a viſible curſe upon men's eſtates; this, like a moth, will ſuddenly fret and conſume the greateſt eſtate. Jam. v. 2, 4. "Your riches "are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten;" i. e. The ſecret curſe of God waſtes and deſtroys what you get. And what was the cauſe? He tells us, ver. 4. "Behold the hire of the labourers that have reap-"ed down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; "and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the "ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

The oppreſſion of poor labourers doth more miſchief to the oppreſſors, than it doth to them that are oppreſſed. It is noted by * one upon this ſcripture, that it is twice repeated in this text, "Which "have reaped your fields;" and then again, The cry of them which "have reaped:" and the reaſon is, becauſe it is their life, and ſo an act of the greateſt unmercifulneſs; and beſides, they are diſappointed of the ſolace of their labours. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. "He hath ſet "his heart upon it;" i. e. he comforts himſelf in the toils and labours of the day, by reckoning upon his wages at the end of the day.

I wiſh thoſe that are owners and employers of poor ſeamen, may ſeaſonably conſider this evil: what a woe is denounced upon him "that uſeth his neighbour's ſervice without wages!" Jer. xxii. 13. Or that by crafty pretences defrauds them of any part thereof, or by tireſome delays wears out their patience, and caſts them upon manifold ſufferings and inconveniencies while they wait for it. God hath

* Manton *in loc.*

not only threatened to be a ſwift witneſs againſt thoſe that oppreſs the hireling in his wages, but hath ſtrictly forbidden the detaining of their wages. The Jews were commanded to make payment before the ſun-ſet*, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Levit. xix. 30. Be juſt in all your dealings and contracts, or never expect the righteous God ſhould ſmile upon your undertakings.

(4.) Falſehood and lying is a blaſting ſin to our employments; a ſin which tends to deſtroy all converſe, and diſband all civil ſocieties. And though by falſehood men may get ſome preſent advantages, yet here what the Holy Ghoſt ſaith of riches gotten this way: "The "getting of riches by a lying tongue, is a vanity toſſed to and fro of "them that ſeek death," Prov. xxi. 6. Some trade in lies as much as in wares; yea, they trade off their wares with lies. And this proves a gainful trade (as ſome men count gain) for the preſent; but, in reality, it is the moſt unprofitable trade that any man can drive. For it is but *the toſſing of a vanity to and fro:* a phraſe importing labour in vain, it profits nothing in the end, and as it profits nothing, ſo it hurts much: they ſeek profit intentionally, but death eventually; i. e. it will bring deſtruction and ruin, not only upon our trades, but our ſouls. The God of truth will not long proſper the way of lying; one penny gotten by a laborious hand is better than great treaſures gotten by a lying tongue: take heed you ſeek not death in ſeeking an eſtate this way. It is a ſin deſtructive to ſociety; for there is no trade where there is no truſt, nor no truſt where there is no truth; and yet this curſed trade of lying creeps into all trades, as if there were no living (as one ſpeaks) without lying: but ſure it is better for you to be *loſers* than *liars*. He ſells a dear bargain indeed that ſells his conſcience with his commodity.

(5.) Perjury, or falſe ſwearing, is a blaſting ſin. The man cannot proſper that lies under the guilt thereof. It is ſaid, Mal. iii. 5. "That "God will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the falſe ſwearer, i. e. it ſhall not be long before God by one remarkable ſtroke of judgment or another witneſs againſt ſo great and horrid an evil. And again, Zech. v. 4. the curſe, yea, the roll of curſes, "ſhall enter into "the houſe of the falſe ſwearer, and ſhall remain in the midſt of his "houſe, and ſhall conſume it, with the timber thereof, and the ſtones "thereof." This is a ſin that hath laid many houſes waſte, even great and fair, without inhabitant. The ruins of many that were once flouriſhing, and great men are at this day left to be the laſting monuments of God's righteous judgments, and dreadful warnings to poſterity.

And thus I have ſhewed you what are thoſe common evils in trade, which are the cauſes of thoſe blaſts and diſappointments upon it. It now remains that we apply it.

*Inference* 1. Doth God ſometimes diſappoint the moſt diligent la-

* He does not make good payment who does not pay in due time.

bours of men in their lawful callings? Then this teacheth you patience and ſubmiſſion under your croſſes and diſappointments; for it is the Lord that orders it to be ſo. Events are in his hand, and it is a ſin of great aggravation to fret and murmur at them when they fall out croſs to your deſires and hopes. "Behold, is it not of the Lord "of hoſts, that the people ſhall labour in the very fire, and the peo- "ple ſhall weary themſelves for very vanity?" Hab. ii. 13.

To labour in the very fire, notes intenſe labour, ſuch as exhauſts the very ſpirits of men whilſt they are ſweltering and toiling at it; and yet all is to no purpoſe, they labour but for vanity: and whence is it that ſuch vigorous endeavours are blaſted, and miſcarry? Is it not of the Lord? And if it be of the Lord, why do we fret and quarrel at his diſpoſals? Indeed, many dare not openly and directly charge God, but ſeek to cover their diſcontent at providence, by a groundleſs quarrel with the inſtruments, who, it may be, are chargeable with nothing; but that after they have done all they could, in the uſe of proper means, they did not alſo ſecure the event. It is true, the dominion of providence doth not excuſe the negligence of inſtruments; and, in many caſes, theſe may be juſtly reproved, when providence is duly honoured and ſubmitted to: But when men groundleſsly quarrel with inſtruments, becauſe they are croſſed in their expectations, the quarrel is commenced againſt God himſelf; and our diſcontents with men are but a covert for our diſcontents with God.

Now this is a ſore evil, a ſin of great and dreadful aggravations. 'To be given over (ſaith a grave * author) to a contradicting ſpirit, 'to diſpute againſt any part of the will of God, is one of the greateſt 'plagues that a man can be given up to.' "Who art thou that re- "plieſt againſt God?" Rom. ix. 20. It may be thou haſt loſt an eſtate, thy friends fail, thy hopes are fallen; God hath blown upon all the projects that thy heart did fancy to itſelf. Poſſibly in one day, the deſigns, labours, and hopes of many years are deſtroyed: Well, be it ſo, yet repine not againſt the Lord. Conſider, he is the Sovereign, and only Lord, who may do whatever he pleaſeth to do without giving thee any account of his matters. Who can ſay to him, What doſt thou? Beſide, if thou be one that God delights in, even theſe diſappointments are to be numbered with thy beſt mercies. Theſe things are permitted to periſh, that thou mayeſt not periſh for ever; and it ſhould trouble thee no more than when thy life is preſerved by caſting out the wares and goods of the ſhip. It is better that theſe periſh than that thou ſhouldſt periſh; but if thou be one that mingled ſin (eſpecially ſuch as were before mentioned) with thy trade, and ſo haſt pulled down miſery upon thine own head, by provoking the Lord againſt thee: With what face canſt thou open thy mouth to complain againſt him? Will you lay a train to blow up

* Mr Strong, Of the will of God, p. 242.

all your ſucceſs, and then fret againſt God, when you ſee the iſſue? O how unreaſonable is this!

But becauſe diſappointments fall out ſo frequently, and it is ſo hard to bring our hearts to a quiet ſubmiſſion to the will of God under them, I will not diſmiſs this point until I have offered you ſome proper and weighty conſiderations to work your hearts into a calm and meek ſubmiſſion to the will of God; and I ſhall account it a great mercy, if they may prevail.

*Conſideration* 1. And, in the firſt place, if thou be one that feareſt God, conſider, that diſappointments in earthly things fix no mark of God's hatred upon thee. He may love thee, and yet croſs thee, Eccl. ix. 1, 2. "No man knows either love or hatred by all the things that "are before him. All things come alike to all; there is one event "to the righteous, and to the wicked." Yea, we often find ſucceſs and proſperity following the wicked, whilſt the rod of God is upon the tabernacles of the righteous. "Theſe are the ungodly that proſ- "per in the world, (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) whilſt in the mean time he "was plagued all the day long, and chaſtened every morning," Pſal. lxxiii. 12, 14. Well then, if you have no other ground than this, you cannot infer the want of love, from the want of ſucceſs. A man may be proſpered in wrath, and croſſed in mercy.

*Conſideration* 2. And what though your projects, hopes, and expectations of enlarging your eſtates fail; yet you may live as happily and comfortably in the condition you are, (if God give you a heart ſuitable to it) as if you had enjoyed all that ſucceſs you ſo fancied and deſired..

It is not the increaſe of an eſtate, but the bleſſing of God upon a competency, that makes our condition comfortable to us. As the eſtate enlarges, ſo doth the heart. The prophet Habakkuk, ſpeaking of the Chaldean prince, Hab. ii. 6. ſaith, "He keeps not at "home, he enlarges his deſire as hell, and is as death, and cannot "be ſatisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto "him all people." And this is the nature of every man's heart, to enlarge its deſire and the greateſt enlargements of providence. Still the heart is projecting for ſome further comfort and content, in ſome new acquiſition; when, indeed, a man is as near it in a lower condition as in the higheſt exaltation.

It is ſtoried of Pyrrhus*, king of Epirus, that having enlarged his dominions by the conqueſt of Macedonia, he thirſted after Italy; and demanding the advice of Cineas, his great counſellor, he aſked the king what he meant to do when he had conquered Italy? Why then, ſaid he) I mean to get Sicily, which is near, rich, and powerful. When you have gotten Sicily, (ſaid Cineas) What then? Afric, ſaid the king, is not far off, and there be many goodly kingdoms, which by my fame, and the valour of my ſoldiers, I may ſubdue. Be it ſo,

* Plutarch in Pyrrho.

ſaid Cineas: When you have Afric, and all in it, what will you do then? Why then, ſaid the king, thou and I will be merry, and make good cheer. Cineas replied, Sir, if this be the end you aim at. what need you venture your kingdom, perſon, and honour, to purchaſe what you have already? Surely Epirus and Macedonia are ſufficient to make you and me merry; and had you all the world, you could not be more merry than you may now be.

Reader, I adviſe thee, under all diſappointments of thy expectations, to bleſs God for any comfortable enjoyment thou haſt. If God give thee a ſmaller eſtate, and a contented heart, it is as well, yea, better than if thou hadſt enjoyed thy deſire. The bee makes a ſweeter meal upon two or three flowers, than the ox that hath ſo many mountains to graze upon.

*Conſideration* 3. And what if by theſe diſappointments, God be carrying on the great deſign of his eternal love upon thy ſoul? This may be the deſign of theſe providences; and if ſo, ſure there is no cauſe for thy deſpondencies. There is a double aim of theſe providences; ſometimes they are ſent to awaken and rouze the dull decayed habits of grace, which under proſperous providences fall aſleep by the intermiſſion of acts, and remiſſion of wonted vigour and activity? And ſhould the Lord permit things to run on at this rate, what a deplorable caſe would this grow to? 'Let a man live (ſaith * one) 'but two or three years without affliction, and he is almoſt good for 'nothing; he cannot pray, nor meditate, nor keep his heart 'fixed upon ſpiritual things: But let God ſmite him in his health, 'child, or eſtate; now he can find his tongue and affections again; 'now he awakes and falls to his duty in earneſt; now God hath 'twice as much honour from him as he had before. Now, ſaith 'God, his amendment pleaſeth me; this rod was well beſtowed: I 'have diſappointed him to his great benefit and advantage. And thus 'God chides himſelf friends with his people again.'

And ſometimes they prove the bleſſed occaſions to work grace. "If "they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, then "he ſheweth them their works, and their tranſgreſſion that they "have exceeded: He openeth alſo their ear to diſcipline, and com-"mandeth that they return from iniquity," Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 10.

And if this be the fruit of it, you will bleſs God through eternity for theſe happy diſappointments. Then theſe things periſhed, that thy ſoul might not periſh.

*Conſideration* 4. Be patient under diſappointments; for if you meekly ſubmit, and quietly wait upon God, he can quickly repair all that you have loſt, and reſtore it by other providences double to you. Have you not heard, after all Job's deprivations, and the fruſtrations of all his earthly hopes, and his admirable patience under all,



* Mr Steel.

what a gracious end the Lord made with him? And why may not you hope for ſuch a comfortable change of providence towards you, if you alſo carry it under diſappointments as he did? Certainly ſad providences are near their change when the heart is calmed in the will of God, and corrected home to him.

*Conſideration* 5. And why ſhould it ſeem ſo hard and grievous to you, for God to diſappoint your hopes and purpoſes, when you cannot but know, that you have diſappointed his expectations from you ſo often, and that in greater and better things than theſe?

He hath looked for fruit (as it is, Iſa. v. 4.) for obedience, reformation, and renewed care of duty from you many times; he promiſed himſelf, and made account of a good return of his afflictions and mercies, and you promiſed him as much, and yet have failed his expectation: And is it then ſtrange that you ſhould fail of your hopes, who have failed God ſo often?

O then ſee that you are quiet in the will of God; fret not at the defeating of your hopes, wreak not your diſcontent upon innocent inſtruments, but look to the juſt and holy, and good will of God in all things. The wife is ſometimes angry with the ſervant for what he hath done, till he tells her that it was his maſter's order, and then ſhe is quiet.

Has a ſhip miſcarried, is a voyage loſt, a relation dead, an eſtate gone, a friend carried into captivity, whoſe return was expected with ſo much delight and comfort? why, if it be ſo, it is the Lord hath done it, and be thou ſilent before him. Your repining will not make it better; ſin is no proper cure for affliction. A quiet and ſubmiſſive ſpirit is well-pleaſing to God, as well as profitable for you.

*Inference* 2. Doth God ſometimes diſappoint the expectations of men in their employments? then never ſet your hearts immoderately upon earthly things, nor raiſe up to yourſelves too great expectations from theſe things. The ſtronger your expectations, the heavier God's diſappointments will be.

There is a double evil in over-reckoning ourſelves, and over-acting our confidence about worldly things: it provokes God to diſappoint us, and then makes the diſappointment much more grievous when it comes.

It provokes a diſappointment, eſpecially to the godly. The Lord is jealous of their affections, and will not endure that any thing ſhould be a co-rival, or competitor with him for their hearts: yea, it is ſo uſual with God to daſh and remove whatever engroſſes too much of the heart, that a gracious ſoul cannot but reckon that comfort in great danger to be loſt, which he finds to be overloved.

If David ſet his heart upon Abſalom, God will not only ſmite him, but ſmite David by him, and make him firſt the inſtrument of his ſorrow, and then the object of it. Jonah did but take a little too much comfort in his gourd, and you know the next news we hear is, that God had prepared a worm to ſmite it, and cauſe it to wither away.

And when your inordinate hopes are croſſed, as it is very probable they will be, how will your ſorrows be aggravated in proportion to them? Thoſe things that ſeemed to promiſe us moſt comfort, are the things that give us moſt ſorrow. Strong affections make ſtrong afflictions. Our ſorrows uſually riſe from what was our hope, and our comforts from that which was the leaſt regarded.

*Inference* 3. If it be ſo, then labour to make ſure of things eternal, leſt you be eternally diſappointed there alſo. O what a ſad caſe is that man in, whoſe expectations fail from both worlds! If your hopes from this world fail, yet you may bear it comfortably, if you fail not in your better hopes; but if theſe fail too, you are of all men the moſt miſerable. You know by experience how ſad it is to have your hopes cut off in theſe ſmaller concerns; to go forth in expectation of a profitable voyage, and to return in a worſe caſe than you went out: it may be you thought to get an eſtate, but the iſſue is to loſe that little you had. You thought to go to ſuch a place, and there meet with a good market, and poſſibly yourſelves may be carried as ſlaves, to be ſold in the ſame market. Theſe diſappointments are very ſad and cutting things, but nothing to an eternal diſappointment in your great concern.

For a man to hope he is in Chriſt, and in a pardoned ſtate, and at laſt find himſelf deceived, and that all the ſins of his nature, heart, and practiſe, lie upon him: to hope for admiſſion into heaven, when he is turned out of this world by death, and find the door ſhut againſt him; to cry with thoſe poor diſappointed wretches, Matth. xxv. 11. "Lord, Lord, open to us;" and receive ſuch an unexpected return from Chriſt as they did, "Depart from me, I know you not:" Lord, how intolerable is ſuch a defeat of hope as this! O! who can think of it without horror!

The things about which your expectations are fruſtrated in this world are ſmall things; you may be happy in the want of them: but the fruſtration of your hopes from the world to come, is in things of infinite weight. Theſe diſappointments are but for a little while! but this will be for ever. O therefore be provoked, even by theſe things to a diligent and ſeaſonable prevention of a far greater miſery.

Since theſe things cannot be ſecured, labour to ſecure thoſe things that may. O that you were but as full of thoughts, cares and fears for heaven as you are for the world! you have ſpent many thouſand thoughts about theſe things to no purpoſe. All your thoughts about them are come to nothing; but had they been ſpent for your ſouls, to what a comfortable account would they now have turned? Friends, I beſeech you make ſure for eternity, and let theſe croſſes and loſſes in the world be the happy occaſions to awaken you to an earneſt and ſerious diligence for your everlaſting intereſts. Then you are no loſers by your loſſes: nay, you will have great cauſe to call them proſperous diſappointments, and gainful loſſes to you.

*Inference* 4. Then as you would not have the works and labours of your hands blaſted, beware of thoſe ſins that provoke God to blow upon them. Think not that injuſtice, oppreſſion, deceit and perjury ſhould ever profit you. God hath curſed all the ways of ſin, and you cannot proſper in them. Above all, beware of atheiſm and irreligion: God will not own them that diſown him, and ſlight his worſhip. I doubt your profanation of the Lord's day, by drunkenneſs, idleneſs, and worldly employments, is not the leaſt cauſe of thoſe diſappointments and loſſes that have befallen you: the firſt day of the week, like the firſt-fruits of the Jews *harveſts*, ſhould ſanctify the whole lump.

And let none pretend that multiplicity of buſineſs will not allow them time and diſpoſition for ſabbath-work. If you be too buſy to attend the Lord's ſervice, he can quickly give you a writ of eaſe, and make you keep more reſting days from your labours than you are willing to do. The Lord would not excuſe the Iſraelites, no, not in their buſieſt ſeaſons, the times of earing and harveſt, and the very building of the tabernacle; but all muſt give way to the ſabbath. And I am ſure the promiſe of bleſſing and ſucceſs is made to the conſcientious obſervation of it: Iſa. lviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn away "thy foot from the ſabbath, from doing thy pleaſure upon my holy "day; and call the ſabbath a Delight, the holy of the Lord, Ho-"nourable; and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor "finding thine own pleaſures, nor ſpeaking thine own words: Then "ſhalt thou delight thyſelf in the Lord:" There is a recompence to the ſoul. "And he ſhall cauſe thee to ride on the high places of the "earth:" There is a reward to the body. Godlineſs is profitable to all things.

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THE

# SEAMAN's RETURN.

## SERMON VI.

### DEUT. xxxiii. 19.

*They ſhall call the people unto the mountain, there they ſhall offer ſacrifices of righteouſneſs: For they ſhall ſuck of the abundance of the ſeas, and of the treaſures hid in the ſand.*

THIS ſcripture is part of the laſt words of Moſes: a man that in his life was a great bleſſing to Iſrael: and when he was to be ſeparated from them by death, he pronounces diſtinct and ſuitable bleſſings upon all the tribes. As Chriſt parted from his diſciples,

bleſſing them, ſo doth Moſes from his people; only with this difference, Moſes as God's mouth pronounced, but the great God of heaven and earth alone could confer the bleſſing. Moſes bleſſed them authoritatively, but could not bleſs them poteſtatively, as Chriſt did. Now theſe words contain the bleſſing of the tribe of Zebulun, which was the tribe of Seamen. And in them we ſhall conſider theſe two parts, viz.

1. Their privilege.
2. Their duty.

*Firſt*, Their privilege, "That they ſhould ſuck of the abundance "of the ſeas, and of the treaſures hid in the ſand." To ſuck the abundance of the ſea is a * metonymical expreſſion, ſignifying as much as to be enriched and ſtored with the wares and merchandiſe imported by ſea to them. Geographers attribute to the ſea, arms and boſoms; and the ſcripture, breaſts. The ſea, like an indulgent mother, embraces thoſe that live upon it in her boſom, and with full flowing breaſts nouriſheth them, and feeds them as a mother doth the infant that ſucks and depends for its livelihood upon her breaſts.

And theſe breaſts do not only afford thoſe that hang upon them the neceſſaries of life, bread, raiment, &c. but the riches, ornaments, and delights of life alſo. "The treaſures hid in the ſand," † as gold, coral, ambergreaſe, and ſuch like precious and rich treaſures which it yields. This was the bleſſing and privilege of the tribe of Zebulun, whoſe cities and villages were commodiouſly ſituated upon the ſea-ſhore for merchandiſe and traffic: as you may ſee Joſ. xix. 11.

*Secondly*, Their duty to which theſe mercies and privileges obliged them: "They ſhall call the people to the mountain, there they "ſhall offer ſacrifices of righteouſneſs." By the *mountain*, we are here to underſtand the *temple*, which Moſes, by the ſpirit of prophecy, foreſaw to be upon mount Sion, and mount Moriah; which two were as the ſhoulders that ſupported it, ver. 12. Here was the worſhip of God; the ſacrifices were here offered up to him. And hither Zebulun, in the ſenſe of God's mercies to them, ſhould call the people, i. e. ſay ſome, their own people, their families, and neighbours; or as others, the ſtrangers that were among them for traffic; ſaying, as Iſa. ii. 3. "Come, let us go up to the houſe of the Lord, to the "mountain of the God of Jacob." And here they ſhall offer *the ſacrifices of righteouſneſs*. By which we are to underſtand their thank-offerings for the mercies they had received of the Lord. The Jews had not only expiatory ſacrifices to procure the pardon of ſins committed, but euchariſtical ſacrifices, or thank-offerings, to teſtify the ſenſe they had of mercies received. Theſe ſacrifices typified moral duties; and when theſe types were aboliſhed, the apoſtle ſhews that

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* *Affluentiam maris ſugere, eſt marinis bonis, & mercibus abundare.* Glaſ.

† *Referunt ad ea quæ emovere ſolent maria, ſcil. ad auri fodinas. Effodient e terra arenoſa aurum.* Pol. Synop. in loc.

" the calves of our lips, the ſacrifices of praiſe," are in the ſtead of them, Heb. xiii. 15.

So then the ſum of all is this, that when they returned from ſea, or had received the bleſſings thereof from the hand of God, they ſhould repair to the place of his worſhip, and there acknowledge and praiſe the God of their mercies. So that the whole verſe thus explained, caſts itſelf into this doctrinal obſervation.

Doct. *That it is the ſpecial duty of ſeamen, when God returns them to their habitations in peace, thankfully to acknowledge and bleſs his name, for all the preſervation and mercies they have received from his hand.*

Theſe are mercies indeed which are obtained from God by prayer, and returned to him again by praiſe. When we have received our mercies, God expects his praiſes: After the Pſalmiſt had opened the hazards and fears of ſeamen upon the ſtormy ocean, and the goodneſs of God in bringing them to their deſired haven, Pſal. cvii. 30. he preſently calls upon them for this duty, ver. 31. " O that men would " praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

O that men would! why, how is it imaginable they ſhould not? He hath the heart of a beaſt, not of a man, that will not. Did I ſay the heart of a beaſt? Give me that word again. There is a kind of gratitude, even in beaſts, to their benefactors. " The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib," Iſa. i. 3.

Now the method into which I will caſt the diſcourſe, ſhall be,

*Firſt*, To open the nature of the duty, and to ſhew you what it is to praiſe God for his mercies.

*Secondly*, To give you the grounds and reaſons of the duty, why God expects it, and you ought to give it to him. And then,

*Thirdly*, To apply it in the ſeveral uſes it is improveable unto.

1. The nature of the duty needs opening; for few underſtand what it is. Alas! it is another manner of thing than a cuſtomary, formal, cold *God be thanked*. Now, if we ſearch into the nature of this duty, we ſhall find that whoever undertakes this angelic work, muſt,

*Firſt*, Be a heedful obſerver of the mercies he receives. This is fundamental to the duty. Where no obſervations of mercies have been made, no praiſes for them can be returned. God was never honoured by his unobſerved mercies. When David had opened the providences of God to the ſeveral degrees and orders of men, in its various adminiſtrations, and called upon them diſtinctly to praiſe God for them; he adds, in the cloſe of all, " Whoſo is wiſe, and will ob- " ſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving-kindneſs " of the Lord," Pſal. cvii. *ult.* It is God's charge againſt Iſrael, Hoſea ii. 8. " She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, " and oil, and multiplied her ſilver:" *i. e.* She did not obſerve and take notice of theſe mercies, as coming from my hand; but only

looked at the next cauſe. Thus it is with many, they think not upon their own mercies; others can obſerve them, but they cannot; they can quickly obſerve what troubles befal them, but take little notice of their own mercies. Such men can never be thankful.

*Secondly*, The thankful man muſt not only *obſerve* what mercies he hath, and from whom they come; but muſt particularly conſider them in their natures, degrees, ſeaſons, and manner of conveyance; there is much of God's glory, and our comfort loſt for want of this. "The "works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all them that have "pleaſure therein," Pſal. cxi. 2. And indeed, there is no employment in all the world, that yields more pleaſure to a gracious ſoul, than the anatomizing of providence doth. How ſweet is it to obſerve the mutual reſpects, coincidences, and introductive occaſions of our mercies! every minute circumſtance hath its weight and value here. He hath little pleaſure in his meat, that ſwallows it whole without chewing.

*Thirdly*, The thankful perſon muſt duly eſtimate and value his mercies. It is impoſſible that man can be thankful for mercies he little eſteems. Iſrael could not praiſe God for that angels food with which he fed them, whilſt they deſpiſed it in ſaying, There is nothing but this *manna*.

And ſurely it ſhews the great corruption of our nature, that thoſe things which ſhould raiſe the value of mercies with us, cauſe us the more to ſlight them; yet thus it falls out. The commonneſs, or long-continuance of mercies with us, which ſhould endear them the more, and every day increaſe our obligation to God, cauſes them to ſeem but cheap and ſmall things. And therefore doth God ſo often threaten them, yea, and remove them, that their worth and excellency may thereby be acknowledged.

*Fourthly*, The thankful perſon muſt faithfully record his mercies, elſe God cannot have his due praiſe for them. "Bleſs the Lord, O "my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits," Pſal. ciii. 2. Forgotten mercies bear no fruit: a bad memory in this caſe, makes a barren heart and life.

I confeſs the mercies of God are ſuch a multitude, that a memory of braſs cannot retain them. "I will come before thee in the mul-"titude of thy mercies," ſaith David, Pſal. v. 7. They are called "ſhowers of bleſſings," Ezek. xxxiv. 26. And as impoſſible it is diſtinctly to recount all our mercies, as to number the drops of rain that fall in a ſhower. Nevertheleſs, it hath been the pious care and endeavour of the people of God, to preſerve and perpetuate his mercies, by uſing all the helps to memory they could. Therefore they have kept regiſters, Exod. xvii. 14. endited Pſalms, *to bring to remembrance*, Pſal. lxx. *title*; denominated places from the mercies received there. Thus Jacob called the place where he found ſo much mercy, Bethel. Hagar named the well, where God unexpectedly relieved

her, Beer-lahai-roi, the well of him that liveth and looketh upon me, Gen. xvi. 13, 14.

They have ſtamped the mercies upon the days in which they received them. Thus the Jews called thoſe days in which God wrought their deliverance, *Purim*, after the name *Pur*, ſignifying the lot Haman had caſt for their lives; Eſther ix. 26. Yea, they have called their mercies upon their children, 1 Sam. i. 20. Thus thankful ſouls have ſtriven to recognize their mercies, that God might not loſe the praiſe, nor themſelves the comfort of them.

*Fifthly*, The thankful perſon muſt be ſuitably affected with the mercies he receives. It is not a *ſpeculative*, but an *affectionate* remembrance that becomes us: then God hath his glory, when the ſenſe of his mercies melts our hearts into holy joy, love, and admiration. Thus David ſits down before the Lord like a man aſtoniſhed at his goodneſs to him; 2 Sam. vii. 20. "And what can David ſay more? "for thou Lord knoweſt thy ſervant." The mercies of God have made the ſaints hearts leap for joy within them: Pſal. xcii. 4. "Thou, Lord, haſt made me glad through thy works; therefore "will I triumph in the works of thy hands." Mercies are not mercies, deliverances are not deliverances to us, if we that receive them are not glad of them.

*Sixthly*, The thankful perſon muſt order his converſation ſuitably to the engagements that his mercies have put him under. When we have ſaid all, it is the life of the thankful, that is the very life of thankfulneſs. Obedience and ſervice are the only real manifeſtations of gratitude. "He that offereth praiſe, glorifieth me: and to "him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation "of God," Pſal. l. 23. Set down this for an everlaſting truth, That God was never praiſed and honoured by an abuſed mercy. God took it ill from Hezekiah, "That he rendered not again ac- "cording to the benefit done unto him," 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. He that is truly thankful will ſay as David, Pſal. cxvi. 12. "What ſhall "I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" We then glorify God with his mercies when we employ them to right ends, when we thankfully take our own ſhare of comfort from them, receiving them with thankſgiving, as from the hand of a father. Mr Swinnock* tells of a young man, who, lying upon his ſick-bed, was always calling for meat; but as ſoon as it was brought him, he ſhook and trembled dreadfully at the ſight of it, and ſo continued till it was taken away; and before his death, acknowledged God's juſtice, ſo that in his health he ordinarily received his meat without thankſgiving.

Uſe all God's mercies with thankfulneſs; God will remember them in fury, who forget him in his favours.

And think not what God beſtows upon you is wholly for your own uſe: but honour God with your mercies by clothing the naked and

* Swinnock's Chriſtian Man's Calling, page 409.

feeding the hungry, especially such as are godly. This is a due improvement of your estates; thus you may make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Ah, how little do we consider what praise, what glory we may occasion this way, from others, to the name of God! It is storied of * Dionysius the Syracusian *tyrant*, that when he saw what heaps of gold and silver his son horded up in his closet, he asked him what he meant to let it lie there, and not to make friends with it, to get the kingdom after his death? O son (said he) thou hast not a spirit capable of a kingdom. Thus honour the Lord with your substance; look upon all you have as your Master's talents, for which you must give an account: and to use and employ them for God, that you may give up your account with joy; and then you will shew yourselves thankful indeed. Thus you see what is included in real thankfulness. O, it is another matter than we take it to be.

2. Next I promised to give you the grounds and reasons of this duty; why you are obliged after the reception of mercies to such a thankful return of praises. And, among many, I will only single out these three, and briefly open them.

*First*, God requires and expects it. It is so special and peculiar a part of his glory, as he will never part with it. As great landlords oblige their tenants to a homage and service, when they make over their estates to them, and reserve a quit-rent to themselves, which they value at a high rate; so God, when he bestows deliverances of mercies upon us, still reserves an acknowledgment to himself: and this is dear to him, he will not endure to be defrauded of it; much less that it be given to another. You find this reservation of praise expressly made by him in Psal. l. 15. "Call upon me in the day of "trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Where you have the request, the grant, and the reservation in the grant, q. d. When I have granted thee thy desire, see thou do not defraud me of my glory. There be three things in every mercy, the *matter* of it, the *comfort* of it, and the *glory* of it. The two first God makes over freely to us, he gives the mercies themselves, he allows us to suck out all the lawful pleasure and delight that is in them; but the third he reserves to himself, and will never part with it to any other. If an Hezekiah himself render not to God due acknowledgments, as well as God loves him, there shall be great wrath upon him and Judah for the default, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.

*Secondly*, You are under manifold engagements to render it to the Lord.

(1.) Common ingenuity obliges to a due acknowledgment of favours freely received; and unthankfulness on that score is the odium of mankind. *Ingratum si dicas, omnia dixeris.* You cannot give a



* *Justin, lib.* 51.

man a more odious character among men, than to ſay, He is an ungrateful man.

(2.) The examples of the very heathens will condemn you. They praiſed their gods, which yet were no gods, when they received any deliverance, Judges xvi. 24. Shall idols, dung-hill deities, receive their ſacrifices and praiſes, whilſt the true God is forgotten?

Nay, (3.) Many of you have formally and expreſsly obliged your ſouls to it, by ſolemn vows and promiſes in the day of your diſtreſs: and yet will you deal perfidiouſly with God? Will you not pay the vows which your lips have uttered? Certainly you can never free your ſouls from the guilt of perfidiouſneſs againſt God, whilſt you give him not the glory due to his name.

3. *Laſtly*, Your ingratitude is the ready way to deprive you of the mercies you have, and to with-hold from you the mercies you might have in your future diſtreſſes and wants. He that is ungrateful for mercies received, provokes God to remove them. Thus it fell out with ungrateful Iſrael, Hoſea ii. 5, 8, 9. "She did not know, (i. e. "ſhe did not with conſideration and thanks duly acknowledge) "that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil. Therefore will I return, "and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the "ſeaſon thereof; and will recover my wool and my flax." Thus they ſuffered their mercies to lapſe into the Lord's hand for non-payment of their duties. If you are weary of your mercies, and willing to be rid of them, you cannot take a more effectual courſe than to forget from whom you had them, and with-hold his praiſe for them.

And then, for future mercies and deliverances, you have no ground to expect any more from God, whom you have thus requited for former favours. He that gives no thanks for one mercy, hath little ground to expect another. It was a ſad word which God ſpake upon this very provocation, Judg. x. 11, 12, 13. when a new diſtreſs befel Iſrael by the Ammonites, and they cried to the Lord for help, he tells them that he had many times delivered them from their enemies: "Yet (ſaith he) have you forſaken me, and ſerved other gods. "Wherefore I will deliver you no more; go and cry to the gods "which ye have choſen, and let them deliver you in the time of "your tribulation." Q. d. With what face can you come to me for new mercies and deliverances, when yourſelves know how former mercies have been abuſed! Think ye that I am weary of my mercies to caſt them away upon ſuch unthankful wretches? No, expect no more mercies from me, "I will deliver you no more." One of the fathers calls ingratitude, *Obex infernalis*, *An helliſh ſtop*, which interrupts the courſe and current of all God's mercies. Mercy is not only a precious thing, too good to be caſt away, but it is a very tender thing, and God deeply reſents the abuſes of it. Thus you ſee the grounds and reaſons of your duty; it now remains that we apply it.

*Uſe* 1. Is it your unqueſtionable duty to return praiſes upon every receipt of mercies? Then, in the firſt place, bear your ſhame and juſt reproof for your manifeſt unthankfulneſs. You dare not deny but you have received many ſignal and eminent mercies from the hands of God. If you ſhould deny that, I need go no farther to prove you prodigiouſly ungrateful. But it is too manifeſt to be denied: you have found God a very preſent help in trouble: his mercy hath often reſcued you out of the jaws of death. Some of you have been in dangers in the deeps; in deaths oft: you have been put to your wit's end; all viſible hope and help failed. You might have ſaid with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxiii. 4. "I looked upon my right "hand, and there was none; and upon the left, but refuge failed." You have ſeen your companions intombed before your eyes in the ſeas, and concluded in your own thoughts your turn was next. You have been in danger by barbarous enemies that have chaſed you upon the ſea to make you a prey: yea, it may be you have been a prey to them, and never thought to have ſeen the land of your nativity, your houſes, wives, and children, any more. You have languiſhed under dangerous diſeaſes, and that remote from friends and neceſſary accommodations; you have loſt your eſtates, and been reduced to a low ebb, and never thought to have ſeen a day of proſperity any more: yet hath the Lord delivered you out of all your troubles. He hath provided unexpected means of preſervation, when the proud waters were ready to go over your ſouls. And though others went down before your eyes, you were marked out for deliverance, God ſpake to the raging waves, ſaying, Touch not this man, I will not deliver him up, though I have done ſo by others. When cruel enemies chaſed you, he delivered you, cauſing the darkneſs of the night to interpoſe ſeaſonably betwixt you and them; as the dark ſide of the cloud ſhadowed Iſrael from the Egyptians that purſued them, Exod. xiv. 20. ſometimes giving you a favourable gale, which blew mercy and deliverance to you: ſometimes by ſtrengthening you to reſiſt their furious attacks, and delivering you from their rage: or if he delivered you into their hands, yet there he preſerved you, enabling you to endure their ſeverities, or cauſing the enemy to treat you well; and finding out a way which you knew not, to bring you at laſt out of the houſe of bondage.

He pitied you under your dangerous diſeaſes; and though neceſſary accommodations and means might be wanting, he was your phyſician, and healed you; he recovered you immediately without means, or bleſſed weak and ſmall means to your good. When you were reduced by loſſes and captivities to a low ebb, ſo that you might ſay as the church, Lam. iii. 17. I forgat proſperity; he hath not only recruited thy ſtrength, but thy eſtate alſo: and when both thy body and eſtate, like an old leaky ſhip, have been ready to ſink, he hath ſtopped the leaks in both, careened, repaired, and launched thee into the world again, as whole, as ſound, and as ſtrong as ever.

And now, reader, ſuffer me to account and expoſtulate a little with thy conſcience; what hath the fruit of all theſe mercies been to thee? And how haſt thou carried it ſince thoſe days, towards the God of thy mercies? Haſt thou indeed been melted by the ſenſe of all this kindneſs, into love, thankfulneſs, and new obedience? Have theſe favours engaged thee to more ſtrictneſs in thy duties, and greater watchfulneſs againſt ſin? Haſt thou ſaid, with that good man, Ezra ix. 13, 14. "And now my God, ſeeing thou haſt puniſhed me leſs "than mine iniquities deſerve, and haſt given me ſuch deliverances as "theſe, ſhould I again break thy commandments?" If it be ſo, ſurely mercy and goodneſs ſhall follow thee all the days of thy life. The Lord then reckons all theſe mercies well beſtowed, and will never repent that he hath done thee good.

But I fear this is not thy caſe. Sure I am, there are ſome among you that have quickly forgotten the God that delivered you. Some that have abuſed him to his face, by aſcribing his mercies to good luck, chance, and fortune; not once owning him as your deliverer. And ſome that have made his mercies weapons of ſin, to wound him withal, waſting your eſtates by prodigality, which were given to refreſh your families, and God's poor; yea, abuſing them to drunkenneſs and luxury. And is this the thanks you return him? For which of all my good works (ſaith Chriſt to the Jews) do you ſtone me? So ſay I, for which of all God's kindneſſes to you, do you thus diſhonour, and abuſe him? O let ſhame cover your faces this day! Go, reader, fold down this leaf, and get thee to thy knees, and ſay, I am the man to whom this reproof is ſent. I have abuſed the God of my mercies, I have turned his grace into wantonneſs. Smite with Ephraim upon thy thigh, and ſay, *What have I done?* Mourn heartily for thy unkindneſs to thy beſt friend, "The God that hath done thee good all "thy life long, and deſerves other returns from thee than theſe."

*Uſe* 2. *Laſtly*, It calls upon you all to be thankful for your mercies. Chryſoſtom once wiſhed for a voice like thunder, that all men might hear him. O that I could ſo call you to this duty, that ſome of you might effectually hear God's call in this exhortation!

Will you own the hand that delivers you, that feeds, clothes, and heals you? Will you reſolve to live the life of praiſe, and render to the Lord according to the benefits you have received? Will you indeed walk humbly, and thankfully, under all your deliverances, and ſucceſſes, and glorify God by that wherewith he hath comforted and refreſhed you? If there be any ſaving knowledge of God, and ſpiritual ſenſe of his love in your ſouls, methinks I ſhould prevail with you; for do but weigh theſe following arguments ſeriouſly, and they will engage you to it.

*Argument* 1. How freely have all your mercies ſtreamed to you from the fountain of grace? There was nothing in you to engage it. The very notion of mercy includes freeneſs; they are all beſtowed upon us, not only as we are *immerentes*, but *male merentes*, undeſerving,

but ill-deſerving creatures; not only without our merits, but againſt our merits. And what though there be a concurrence of your abilities, head-work and hand-work in the procurement of ſome of your mercies, yet ſtill thoſe mercies are the pure effects of free-grace: for all thoſe endeavours of yours had ſignified nothing to their procurement, without God's bleſſing; yea, and that wiſdom and induſtry which you have uſed, were themſelves the free gifts of God. You know there are thouſands in the world as induſtrious and wiſe as you, and ſuch as never provoked God by ſuch ſins as you have; who yet are denied the mercies you enjoy. O how ſhould this endear you to God!

*Argument* 2. How ſeaſonably your mercies have been beſtowed upon you in the very point of extremity and danger! God hath on purpoſe ſuffered it to grow to an extremity, that thereby he might commend his mercy to you with greater advantage. "In the mount "of the Lord it hath been ſeen," Gen. xxii. 14. without this God ſaw his mercies would have been ſlighted, and low prized by you: But God hath watched the opportunity of beſtowing his goodneſs upon you, for no other end but to magnify his mercies in your eyes, and make the deeper and more laſting impreſſions upon your hearts. Shall ſuch mercies, which at firſt were ſo amazing and overwhelming to you, at the reception whereof you were like men that dreamed, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, Pſalm cxxvi. 1. ſo ſoon grow ſtale and common? God forbid!

*Argument* 3. How ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing have ſome of your mercies been? God hath not dealt with every one as he hath with you. Are not ſome that went out with you found wanting at your return: They are among the dead, it may be among the damned, and you among the living, yet enjoying the capacity and the means of ſalvation. God hath proſpered your voyage, and returned you with ſucceſs; you have ſucked the abundance of the ſea, and the treaſures hid in the ſand, as the text ſpeaks; but others may ſay as Naomi, Ruth i. 21. "I went out full, and am come back empty." I went out full of hopes, and am come back with ſad diſappointments. And is not this a ſtrong tie to thankſgiving?

*Argument* 4. Did not your mercies find you under great guilt? You know what your own tranſgreſſions againſt the Lord were, and yet ſuch was the ſtrength of mercy, that it brake through all your great provocations, and made its way to you through a multitude of iniquities. It came triumphing over all your great unworthineſs; and is not ſuch mercy worthy to be admired, and recorded for ever! O what will affect and melt your hearts, if this will not? Surely ſuch mercies have a conſtraining power in them, upon all ſenſible ſouls.

*Argument* 5. To conclude; if all the goodneſs of God which hath paſſed before your eyes, does indeed prevail upon you to love the Lord, and fear to offend him; if it really conſtrains you to give up yourſelves, and all you have, to be his; then all this is but the be-

ginning of mercies, and you ſhall ſee yet greater things than theſe. God hath more mercies yet behind, and thoſe of a higher kind and more excellent nature than theſe temporal mercies are. You are now delivered from the dangers of the ſea, and have eſcaped thoſe perils: O but what is this to deliverance from wrath to come? You have been preſerved from, or delivered out of Turkiſh ſlavery; but what is that to a deliverance from the curſe of the law, the bondage of your luſts, and the power of Satan? Happy ſouls, if theſe deliverances do in any meaſure prove introductive to the great ſalvation.

## *THE CONCLUSION.*

Thus I have, as the Lord hath enabled me, endeavoured to chuſe and improve proper ſubjects for your meditation in every condition that befals you. I cannot carry theſe truths one degree farther, it is the Lord only that can make them effectual to your ſouls. But it is my earneſt requeſt to you, maſters, that have the over-ſight, and muſt give an account for your companies, that you will not only read and conſider theſe things yourſelves, but that you will at fit ſeaſons, eſpecially upon the Lord's day, read and inculcate them upon your ſervants and company; and that, as thoſe who muſt give an account. Will not this be a better expence of that precious and hallowed time, than to ſpend it in ſleeping in your cabins, or drinking in tipling-houſes? All that ſin of theirs which you may prevent, and do not, becomes your own ſin. And have you not perſonal ſins enough already, but you muſt draw the guilt of their ſins upon you alſo? I beſeech you, and it is my laſt requeſt, that you will faithfully labour, that you and your companies may ſerve the Lord.

A

# SAINT INDEED:

OR,

## THE GREAT WORK OF A CHRISTIAN,

*OPENED AND PRESSED.*

From Prov. iv. 23.

## THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of Jeſus Chriſt in *Dartmouth*, over whom the Holy Ghoſt hath made me an Overſeer: Sound Judgment, true Zeal, and unſtained Purity, are heartily wiſhed.

*My Dear Friends,*

THERE are three ſad ſights with which our eyes ſhould continually affect our hearts: The *firſt*, is to behold in every place ſo many profane and diſſolute ones, who bear the very image of Satan; the face of whoſe converſation plainly diſcovers what they are, and whither they are going, Philip. iii. 18, 19. Theſe look like themſelves, the children of wrath. The *ſecond* is to ſee ſo many curſed hypocrites artificially diſguiſing themſelves, and with marvellous dexterity acting the parts of ſaints, ſo that even a judicious eye may ſometimes miſtake the *ſimilar workings* of the Spirit on them, for his *ſaving workings* on others: To hear ſuch a perſon conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences; would eaſily perſuade a man to believe that he hath the heart, as well as the face of a ſincere Chriſtian: For,

*Sic oculos, ſic ille manus, ſic ora ferebat.*

So the people of God do ſpeak, ſo they pray, and even ſo they open their conditions: Theſe look like ſaints, but are none. The *third* is to ſee ſo many real ſaints, in whom the ſpirit of truth is, who yet, through the impetuous workings of their corruptions, and neglecting of the watch over their hearts, do often fall into ſuch ſcandalous practices, that they look like hypocrites, though they are not ſo.

Theſe are three ſad ſights indeed, and O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I may weep abundantly over them all!

For the *firſt*, I would mourn heartily, conſidering that they (ſo continuing) muſt be damned eternally, 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

For the *ſecond*, I would both weep and tremble, conſidering that they (ſo abiding) muſt be damned doubly, Matth. xxiv. 51.

And for the *third* no leſs than any of the reſt, becauſe, though though they themſelves may, and ſhall be ſaved, yet their examples make faſt the bonds of death upon both the former, Matth. xviii. 7. 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they ſhould ſhed the blood of others ſouls, for whom Chriſt ſhed his own blood! That ever they ſhould be *cruel* to others who have found Chriſt ſo *kind* to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally, but ſo it proves occaſionally and eventually. Suffer me here to digreſs a little, and expoſtulate with theſe prejudiced and hardened ſouls, I will preſently return to you again. O why do you miſchieve your own ſouls by other men's examples? Becauſe they ſtumble and break their ſhins, will you fall and break your necks? I deſire all ſuch as harden themſelves by theſe things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition, would ſoberly conſider, and anſwer theſe three queries.

*Query* 1. Doth religion any way countenance or patronize the ſinful practices of its profeſſors? Or doth it not rather impartially and ſeverely condemn them? It is the glory of the Chriſtian religion, that it is pure and undefiled, Jam. i. 27. No doctrine ſo holy, Pſal. xix. 8. Nor doth any make more proviſion for an holy life, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Indeed there is a caſe wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow from, and neceſſarily follow their principles: As for example, if I ſee a Papiſt ſin boldly, I may charge it upon his principles, for they ſet pardons to ſale, and ſo make way for looſeneſs. If I ſee an Arminian ſlight the grace of God, and proudly advance himſelf, I may cry ſhame upon his principles, which directly lead to it: But can I do ſo where ſuch practices are condemned and provided againſt by their own avowed principles, who commit them?

*Query* 2. Is it not a moſt irrational thing to let fly at religion becauſe of the ſcandalous ways of ſome, whilſt, in the mean time, you wholly ſlight and over-look the holy and heavenly converſation of many others? Are all that profeſs godlineſs looſe and careleſs in their lives? No, ſome are an ornament to their profeſſion, and the glory of Chriſt: And why muſt the innocent be condemned with the guilty? Why the eleven for one Judas?

*Query* 3. If you condemn religion becauſe of the ſcandalous lives of ſome that profeſs it, muſt you not then caſt off all religion in the world, and turn down-right atheiſts? Surely this is the conſequent of it: For what religion is there, but ſome that profeſs it walk contrary to their profeſſion? And then, as Conſtantine told the Novatian, you muſt ſet up a ladder, and go to heaven by yourſelf.

But alas! it is not our printed apologies for religion, but the viſible reformations of its profeſſors, that muſt both ſalve its honour, and re-

move thoſe fatal ſtumbling-blocks at which the blind world ſtrikes, and falls into eternal perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected: *Firſt*, By convincing the conſciences of profeſſors of their miſcarriages, and the evil aggravations of them. *Secondly*, By medicating the heart, and cleanſing the fountain whence they proceed. In the *firſt* of theſe, a worthy and eminent ſervant of Chriſt hath lately laboured, holding a clear goſpel-glaſs before the faces of profeſſors, which truly repreſents their ſpots and blemiſhes: if he that reads it will conſider, apply, and practiſe, it ſhall doubtleſs turn to his ſalvation; but, if it turn to no good account to him that reads it, I know it ſhall turn to a teſtimony for him that wrote it. The *ſecond* is a principal deſign of this ſmall treatiſe, the ſubject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily uſe to the people of God, though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weakneſſes: every one cannot be excellent, who yet may be uſeful. *See Goſpel-glaſs.*

I will exerciſe your patience no longer than whilſt I tell you,

1. Why I publiſh it to the view of the world.
2. Why I direct it particularly to you.

*Firſt*, For the publication of it, take this ſincere and brief account, That as I was led to this ſubject by a ſpecial providence, ſo to the publication of it by a kind of neceſſity. The providence at firſt leading me to it, was this, A dear and choice friend of my intimate acquaintance being under much inward trouble, upon the account of ſome ſpecial heart-diſorder, opened the caſe to me, and earneſtly requeſted ſome rules and helps in that particular; whilſt I was bending my thoughts to that ſpecial caſe, divers other caſes of like importance (ſome of which were dependent upon that conſideration) occurred to my thoughts, and this ſcripture, which I have inſiſted upon, preſented itſelf, as a fit foundation for the whole diſcourſe; which being lengthened out to what you ſee, divers friends requeſted me to tranſcribe for their uſe, divers of the caſes here handled, and ſome others begged me to publiſh the whole, to which I was in a manner neceſſitated, to ſave the pains of tranſcribing, which to me is a very tedious, and tireſome work: and juſt as I had almoſt finiſhed the copy, an opportunity (and that ſomewhat ſtrangely) offered to make it public. So that from firſt to laſt, I have been carried beyond my firſt intentions in this thing.

*Objection.* If any ſay, The world is even cloyed with books, and therefore though the diſcourſe be neceſſary, yet the publication is needleſs.

*Solution.* 1. I anſwer, There are multitudes of books indeed, and of them many concern not themſelves about root-truths, and practical godlineſs, but ſpend their ſtrength upon impractical notions, and frivolous controverſies; many alſo ſtrike at root-truths, and endea-

vour to undermine the power of godlineſs; and ſome there are that nouriſh the root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great truths of the goſpel, that they may be bread for ſouls to live and feed on: Now, though I could wiſh that thoſe who had handled the pen of the ſcribe, had better employed their time and pain, than to obtrude ſuch uſeleſs diſcourſes upon the world; yet for books of the latter rank, I ſay, that when huſbandmen complain of too much corn, let Chriſtians complain of too many ſuch books.

2. And if you be ſo highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that ſuch books are needleſs to you; if you let them alone, they will do you no hurt, and other poor hungry ſouls will be glad of them, and bleſs God for what you deſpiſe and leave.

*Objection.* If it be ſaid that ſeveral of the caſes here handled touch not your condition, I anſwer,

*Solution* 1. That which is not your condition may be another's condition. If you be placed in an eaſy, full and proſperous ſtate, and ſo have no need of the helps here offered to ſupport your hearts under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every day's proviſion: If you be dandled upon the knee of providence, ſome of your brethren are under its feet: If you have inward peace and tranquillity of ſpirit, and ſo need not the counſels here given, to ward off thoſe deſperate concluſions that poor afflicted ſouls are ready to draw upon themſelves at ſuch a time; yet it may be a word in ſeaſon to them, and they may ſay as David to Abigail, "Bleſſed be thou of the Lord, and bleſſed be thy advice."

2. That may be your condition ſhortly, which is not your condition at preſent: ſay not thy mountain ſtands ſtrong, thou ſhalt never be moved: there are changes in the right-hand of the Moſt High; and then thoſe truths which are little more eſteemed than hedge-fruits, will be as apples of gold in pictures of ſilver. In Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11. the prophet there teaches the Jews (who then dwelt in their own houſes) how to defend their religion in Babylon, and what they ſhould ſay to the Chaldeans there, and therefore that verſe is written in Chaldee. So much for the reaſons of its publication. Next, for the dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto by the conſideration,

1. Of the relation I have to you above all the people in the world: I look upon my gifts as yours, my time as yours, and all the talents I am entruſted with, as yours: it is not with you as with a woman whoſe huſband is dead, and ſo is freed from the law of her huſband, the relation ſtill continues, and ſo do all the mutual duties of it.

2. By the conſideration of my neceſſitated abſence from you, I would not that perſonal abſence ſhould by inſenſible degrees untwiſt (as uſually it doth) the cord of friendſhip; and therefore I have endeavoured (as abſent friends uſe to do) to preſerve and ſtrengthen it by this ſmall remembrance. It was Veſpaſian's anſwer to Apollonius, when he deſired acceſs for two philoſophers, 'My doors (ſaid Veſpa-

‹ ſian) are always open to philoſophers, but my very breaſt is open ‹ to thee.' I cannot ſay with him, my doors are open for the free acceſs of friends, being by a ſad providence ſhut againſt myſelf; but this I can ſay, my very breaſt is ſtill open to you; you are as dear to me as ever.

3. Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual uſefulneſs and neceſſity of theſe truths for you, which you will have continual need of: And I know few of you have ſuch happy memories to retain, and I cannot be always with you to inculcate theſe things, but *litera ſcripta manet.* I was willing to leave this with you as a legacy, as a teſtimony of ſincere love for, and care over you: this may counſel and direct you when I cannot: I may be rendered uſeleſs to you by a civil or natural death; but this will out-live me, and O that it may ſerve your ſouls when I am ſilent in the duſt.

To haſten now to a concluſion, I have only theſe three requeſts to you, which I earneſtly beſeech you not to deny me; yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to ſlight theſe requeſts.

1. Above all other ſtudies in the world, ſtudy your own hearts: waſte not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and ſapleſs controverſies. It is reported even of Bellarmine (how truly I examine not) * *Quod a ſtudiis ſcholaſticæ theologiæ averteretur fere nauſeabundus, quoniam ſucco carebant liquidæ pietatis*, i. e. he turned with loathing from the ſtudy of ſchool-divinity, becauſe it wanted the ſweet juice of piety; I had rather it ſhould be ſaid of you, as one ſaid of † Swinfeldius, "He wanted a regular head, but not an honeſt heart," than that you ſhould have regular heads, and irregular hearts. My dear flock, I have, according to the grace given me, laboured in the courſe of my miniſtry among you, to feed you with the heart-ſtrengthening bread of practical doctrine; and I do aſſure you, it is far better you ſhould have the ſweet and ſaving impreſſions of goſpel-truths feelingly and powerfully conveyed to your hearts, than only to underſtand them by a bare ratiocination, or dry ſyllogiſtical inference. Leave trifling ſtudies to ſuch as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to employ it: remember you are at the door of eternity, and have other work to do; thoſe hours you ſpend upon heart-work in your cloſets, are the golden ſpots of all your time, and will have the ſweeteſt influence upon your laſt hour. Never forget theſe ſermons I preached to you upon that ſubject, from 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. Heart-work is weighty, and difficult work; an error there may coſt you your ſouls: I may ſay of it as Auguſtine ſpeaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, *Nihilo facilius aut periculoſius erratur;* A man can err in nothing more eaſily or more dangerouſly. O then ſtudy your hearts.

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* *Fuligatius in vita Bellarm.*

† *Caput regulatum illi deſuit, cor bonum non deſuit.*

2. My next requeſt is, That you will carefully look to your converſations, and be accurate in all your ways, hold forth the word of life: be ſure by the ſtrictneſs and holineſs of your lives, to ſettle yourſelves in the very conſciences of your enemies. Remember that your lives muſt be produced in the great day to judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2. O then, what manner of perſons ought you to be! you have many eyes over you; the omniſcient eye of God that ſearches heart and reins, Rev. ii. 23. the vigilant eye of Satan, Job i. 7, 8. the envious eyes of enemies, that curiouſly obſerve you, Pſal. v. 8. the quick and obſervant eye of conſcience, which none of your actions eſcape, Rom. ix. 1.

O then be preciſe and accurate in all manner of converſation; keep up the power of godlineſs in your cloſets and families, and then you will not let it fall in your more public employments and converſes in the world: I have often told you, that it is the honour of the goſpel, that it makes the beſt parents and children, the beſt maſters and ſervants, the beſt huſbands and wives in the world.

My third and laſt requeſt is, that you may pray for me: I hope I can ſay, and I am ſure ſome of you have acknowledged, that I came at firſt among you, as the return and anſwer of your prayers: and indeed ſo it ſhould be, ſee Luke x. 2. I am perſuaded alſo, I have been carried on in my work by your prayers; it is ſweet when it is ſo; ſee Eph. vi. 18, 19. And I hope by your prayers to receive yet a farther benefit, even that which is mentioned, Heb. xiii. 18, 19. Philem. ver. 22. And truly it is but equal you ſhould pray for me, I have often prayed for you: let the pulpit, family, and cloſet witneſs for me; and God forbid I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you.

Yea, friends, your own intereſt may perſuade to it: what mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage; if God preſerve me, it is for your uſe and ſervice: the more gifts and graces a miniſter hath, the better for them that ſhall wait on his miniſtry; the more God gives in to me, the more I ſhall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this ſmall teſtification of my great love, and have recourſe to it, according as the exigencies of your condition ſhall require: read it conſideringly, and obediently; judge it not by the dreſs and ſtyle, but by the weight and ſavour of what you read. It is a good rule of Bernard, *In legendis libris, non quæramus ſcientiam ſed ſaporem*, i. e. In reading books, regard not ſo much the ſcience as the ſavour. That it may prove the ſavour of life unto life to you, and all thoſe in whoſe hands it ſhall come, is the hearty deſire of

*Your loving and faithful Paſtor,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

From my ſtudy at Ley, in Slapton, *Oct.* 7, 1667.

A

# SAINT INDEED &c.

PROV. iv. 23.

*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the iſſues of life.*

THE heart of man is his worſt part before it be regenerate, and the beſt afterwards: it is the ſeat of principles, and the fountain of actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Chriſtian ought to be, principally fixed upon it.

The greateſt difficulty in converſion is to win the heart to God; and the greateſt difficulty after converſion is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and ſtreſs of religion; here is that which makes the way to life a narrow way, and the gate to heaven a ſtrait gate. Direction and help in this great work are the ſcope and ſum of this text: wherein we have,

1. An exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence."
2. The reaſon, or motive enforcing it, "For out of it are the iſſues "of life."

In the exhortation I ſhall conſider,

1. The matter of the duty.
2. The manner of performing it.

1. The matter of the duty, *keep thy heart*. Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which philoſophers call the *primum vivens, et ultimum moriens;* the firſt that lives, and the laſt that dies; but by heart, in a metaphor, the ſcripture ſometimes underſtands ſome particular noble faculty of the ſoul: in Rom. i. 21. it is put for the underſtanding part, their fooliſh heart, i. e. "their fooliſh underſtanding was darkened." And Pſalm cxix. 11. it is put for the memory, "Thy word have I hid in my heart;" and 1 John iii. 10. it is put for the conſcience, which hath in it both the light of the underſtanding and the recognitions of the memory: if our heart condemn us, i. e. if your conſciences, whoſe proper office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole ſoul, or inner man; for look what the heart is to the body, that the ſoul is to the man; and what health is to the heart, that holineſs is to the ſoul: *Quod ſanitas in corpore, id ſanctitas in corde.* The ſtate of the whole body depends upon the ſoundneſs and vigour of the heart, and the everlaſting ſtate of the whole man upon the good or ill condition of the ſoul.

And by keeping the heart, underſtand the *diligent* and *conſtant* uſe and improvement of all holy means and duties, to preſerve the ſoul from ſin, and maintain its ſweet and free communion with God.

* Lavater, on the place, will have the word taken from a beſieged garriſon, begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous citizens within, in which danger the ſoldiers, upon pain of death, are commanded to watch; and whereas the expreſſion *(keep thine heart)* ſeems to put it upon us as our work, yet it doth not imply a ſufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to ſtop the ſun in its courſe, or make the rivers run backward, as by our own ſkill and power to rule and order our hearts: we may as well be our own *ſaviours*, as our own *keepers;* and yet Solomon ſpeaks properly enough, when he ſaith *keep thy heart;* becauſe the duty is ours, though the power be God's. A natural man hath no power, a gracious man hath ſome, though not ſufficient; and that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and aſſiſting ſtrength of Chriſt; *Gratia gratiam poſtulat*, grace within us is beholden to grace without us, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." So much of the matter of the duty.

2. The manner of performing it is, *with all diligence;* the Hebrew is very emphatical, † *Cum omni cuſtodia*, keep with all keeping, *q. d.* keep, keep; ſet double guards, your hearts will be gone elſe. And this vehemency of expreſſion, with which the duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

3. The reaſon, or motive quickening to this duty, is very forcible and weighty: "For out of it are the iſſues of life." That is, it is the ſource and fountain of all vital actions and operations; *Hinc fons boni et peccandi origo*, ſaith Jerom; it is the ſpring and original both of good and evil, as the ſpring in a watch that ſets all the wheels in motion. The heart is the treaſury, the hand and tongue but the ſhops; what is in theſe, comes from thence; the hand and tongue always begin where the heart ends. The heart contrives, and the members execute; Luke vi. 45. "A good man out of the good "treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man "out of the evil treaſure of his heart bringeth forth evil things; for "out of the abundance of his heart his mouth ſpeaketh." So then, if the heart err in its work, theſe muſt needs miſcarry in theirs; for heart-errors are like the errors of the firſt concoction, which cannot be rectified afterwards: Or like the miſplacing, and inverting of the ſtamps and letters in the preſs, which muſt needs cauſe ſo many errata in all the copies that are printed off. O then how important a duty is that which is contained in the following propoſition?

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* I ſay conſtant, for the reaſon added in the text extends the duty to all the ſtates and conditions of a Chriſtian's life, and makes it bind *ad ſemper:* If the heart muſt be kept becauſe out of it are the iſſues of life; then as long as theſe iſſues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

† מִבֹּל מִשְׁמָר

Doct. *That the keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great buſineſs of a Chriſtian's life.*

What the philoſopher ſaith of waters, is as properly applicable to hearts; *Suis terminis difficile continentur*, it is hard to keep them within bounds: God hath ſet bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they tranſgreſs, not only the bounds of grace and religion, but even of reaſon and common honeſty? *Hic labor, hoc opus eſt;* this is that which affords the Chriſtian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying-day. It is not the cleanſing of the hand that makes the Chriſtian, for many a hypocrite can ſhew as fair a hand as he; but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes ſo many ſad complaints, and coſts ſo many deep groans and briniſh tears. It was the pride of Hezekiah's heart that made him lie in the duſt mourning before the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. It was the fear of hypocriſy invading the heart, that made David cry, "Let my heart be found in thy ſtatutes that I "be not aſhamed," Pſalm cxix. 80. It was the ſad experience he had of the diviſions and diſtractions of his own heart, in the ſervice of God, that made him pour out that prayer, Pſalm lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name."

The method in which I ſhall improve the point, ſhall be this,

*Firſt*, I ſhall enquire what the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

*Secondly*, Aſſign divers reaſons, why Chriſtians muſt make this the great work and buſineſs of their lives.

*Thirdly*, Point at thoſe ſpecial ſeaſons which eſpecially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

*Fourthly*, and *laſtly*, Apply the whole in ſeveral uſes.

1. What the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

To keep the heart, neceſſarily ſuppoſes a previous work of ſanctification, which hath ſet the heart right, by giving it a new ſpiritual bent and inclination; for as long as the heart is not *ſet right* by grace, as to its habitual frame, no duties or means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the poiſe of the unſanctified heart, which biaſſes and moves it in all its deſigns and actions; and as long as it is ſo, it is impoſſible that any external means ſhould keep it with God.

Man, by creation, was of one conſtant, uniform frame and tenour of ſpirit, held one ſtraight and even courſe; not one thought or faculty revelled or diſordered; his mind had a perfect illumination to underſtand and know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance therewith; his ſenſitive appetite, and other inferior powers, ſtood in a moſt obedient ſubordination.

Man, by degeneration, is become a moſt diſordered and rebellious creature, conteſting with, and oppoſing his Maker, as the *firſt cauſe*, by ſelf-dependence; as the *chiefeſt good*, by ſelf-love; as the *higheſt Lord*, by ſelf-will, and as the *laſt end*, by ſelf-ſeeking; and ſo is quite

diſordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated underſtanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will full of rebellion and ſtubbornneſs; his ſubordinate powers, caſting off the dominion and government of the ſuperior faculties.

But by regeneration this diſordered ſoul is ſet aright again; ſanctification being the rectifying and due framing, or as the ſcripture phraſes it, the renovation of the ſoul after the image of God, Eph. iv. 24. in which *ſelf-dependence* is removed by faith; *ſelf-love* by the love of God; *ſelf-will* by ſubjection and obedience to the will of God; and *ſelf-ſeeking* by ſelf-denial. The darkened underſtanding is again illuminated, Eph. i. 18. the refractory will ſweetly ſubdued, Pſalm cx. 3. the rebellious appetite, or concupiſcence gradually conquered, Rom. v. 7. *per tot.* And thus the ſoul which ſin had univerſally depraved is again by grace reſtored and rectified.

This being pre-ſuppoſed, it will not be difficult to apprehend what it is to keep the heart, which is nothing elſe but the *conſtant care and diligence of ſuch a renewed man, to preſerve his ſoul in that holy frame to which grace hath reduced it, and daily ſtrives to hold it.*

For though grace hath, in a great meaſure, rectified the ſoul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper: yet ſin often actually diſcompoſes it again: ſo that even a gracious heart is like a muſical inſtrument, which, though it be never ſo exactly tuned, a ſmall matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aſide but a little, and it will need ſetting again before you can play another leſſon on it; even ſo ſtands the caſe with gracious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead, and diſordered when they come to another! And therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, Job xi. 13. "If thou prepare thine heart, and ſtretch out thine hands "towards him." Well then, to keep the heart is carefully to preſerve it from ſin, which diſorders it; and maintain that ſpiritual and gracious frame, which fits it for a life of communion with God. And this includes theſe ſix acts in it:

1. Frequent obſervation of the frame of the heart, turning in and examining how the caſe ſtands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal perſons take no heed to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts: there are ſome men and women that have lived forty or fifty years in the world, and have ſcarce had one hour's diſcourſe with their own hearts all that while: It is a hard thing to bring a man and himſelf together upon ſuch an account; but ſaints know thoſe ſoliloquies and ſelf-conferences to be of excellent uſe and advantage. The heathen could ſay, *anima ſedendo et quieſcendo fit ſapiens*, the ſoul is made wiſe by ſitting ſtill in quietneſs: though bankrupts wiſh not to look into their books of accompt, yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, Pſal. lxxvii. 6. "I commune with mine own heart." The heart can never be kept until its caſe be examined and underſtood.

2. It includes deep humiliation for heart-evils and diſorders; thus

Hezekiah humbled himſelf for the pride of his heart, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. Thus the people were ordered to ſpread forth their hands to God in prayer, in a ſenſe of the plague of their own hearts, 1 Kings viii. 38. Upon this account many an upright heart hath been laid low before God: O what an heart have I? They have in their confeſſions pointed at the heart, the pained place; Lord, here is the wound, here is the plague-ſore. It is with the heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it, if a ſmall duſt get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at reſt till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earneſt ſupplications and inſtant prayer for heart-purifying and rectifying grace, when ſin hath defiled and diſordered it; ſo Pſalm xix. 12. "Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults;" and Pſalm lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Saints have always many ſuch petitions depending before the throne of God's grace; this is the thing which is moſt pleaded by them with God: When they are praying for outward mercies, haply their ſpirits may be more remiſs, but when it comes to the heart-caſe, then they extend their ſpirits to the utmoſt, fill their mouths with arguments, weep and make ſupplication: Oh, for a better heart! Oh for a heart to love God more. To hate ſin more, to walk more evenly with God: Lord, deny not to me ſuch a heart, whatever thou deny me; give me an heart to fear thee, love and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in deſolate places. It is obſerved of holy Mr Bradford, that when he was confeſſing ſin, he would never give over confeſſing until he had felt ſome brokenneſs of heart for that ſin; and when praying for any ſpiritual mercy, would never give over that ſuit, until he had got ſome reliſh of that mercy. That is the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the impoſing of ſtrong engagements and bonds upon ourſelves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occaſions whereby the heart may be induced to ſin: Well-compoſed, adviſed, and deliberate vows, are, in ſome caſes, of excellent uſe to guard the heart againſt ſome ſpecial ſin; ſo Job xxxi 1. "I made a covenant "with mine eyes;" by this means, holy ones have over-awed their ſouls, and preſerved themſelves from defilement by ſome ſpecial heart-corruptions.

5. It includes a conſtant holy jealouſy over our own hearts; quick-ſighted ſelf-jealouſy is an excellent preſervative from ſin; he that will keep his heart muſt have the eyes of his ſoul awake and open upon all the diſorderly and tumultuous ſtirrings of his affections; if the affections break looſe, and the paſſions be ſtirred, the ſoul muſt diſcover and ſuppreſs them before they get to an height: O my ſoul, doſt thou well in this? My tumultuous thoughts and paſſions, where is your commiſſion?

*State viri, quæ cauſa viæ? quive eſtis in armis.* Virg.

Happy is the man that thus feareth always, Prov. xxviii. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, ſhake off ſecurity, and preſerve themſelves from iniquity; he that will keep his heart muſt feed with fear, rejoice with fear, and paſs the whole time of his ſojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from ſin.

6. And, laſtly, To add no more, it includes the realizing of God's preſence with us, and ſetting the Lord always before us: This the people of God have found a ſingular mean to keep their hearts upright, and awe them from ſin; when the eye of our faith is fixed upon the eye of God's omniſcience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy Job durſt not ſuffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought; and what was it that moved him to ſo great a circumſpection? Why, he tells you, Job xxxi. 4. "Doth he "not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps? Walk before me (ſaith "God to Abraham) and be thou perfect," Gen. xvii. 1. Even as parents uſe to ſet their children in the congregation before them, knowing that elſe they will be toying and playing; ſo would the heart of the beſt man too, were it not for the eye of God.

In theſe and ſuch like particulars, do gracious ſouls expreſs the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking looſe of their corruptions in times of temptation, as ſeamen are to bind faſt the guns, that they break not looſe in a ſtorm; as careful to preſerve the ſweetneſs and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great ſweat, is of taking cold, by going forth into the chill air. This is the work, and of all works in religion it is the moſt difficult, conſtant, and important work.

1. It is the hardeſt work; heart-work is hard work indeed. To ſhuffle over religious duties with a looſe and heedleſs ſpirit, will coſt no great pains; but to ſet thyſelf before the Lord, and tye up thy looſe and vain thoughts to a conſtant and ſerious attendance upon him; this will coſt thee ſomething: To attain a facility and dexterity of language in prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expreſſions, is eaſy; but to get thy heart broken for ſin whilſt thou art confeſſing it; melted with free grace whilſt thou art bleſſing God for it; to be really aſhamed and humbled through the apprehenſions of God's infinite holineſs, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not only in, but after duty, will ſurely coſt thee ſome groans and travailing pains of ſoul: To repreſs the outward acts of ſin, and compoſe the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner, is no great matter; even carnal perſons by the force of common principles can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to ſet and keep up an holy government over thy thoughts, to have all things lie ſtraight and orderly in the heart, this is not eaſy.

2. It is a conſtant work. The keeping of the heart is ſuch a work

as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life end together: It is with a Chriſtian in this buſineſs, as it is with ſeamen that have ſprung a leak at ſea, if they tug not conſtantly at the pump, the water increaſes upon them, and will quickly ſink them. It is in vain for them to ſay the work is hard, and we are weary; there is no time or condition in the life of a Chriſtian, which will ſuffer an intermiſſion of this work. It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of Moſes' hands, whilſt Iſrael and Amalek were fighting below, Exod. xvii. 12. No ſooner do Moſes' hands grow heavy and ſink down, but Amalek prevails. You know it coſt David and Peter many a ſad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. It is the moſt important buſineſs of a Chriſtian's life. Without this we are but formaliſts in religion; all our profeſſions, gifts, and duties ſignify nothing: "My ſon, give me thine heart," Prov. xxiii. 36. God is pleaſed to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; he will put this honour upon the creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not whatever elſe you bring to him: There is ſo much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in it. Concerning the heart, God ſeems to ſay, as Joſeph of Benjamin, "If you bring not Benjamin "with you, you ſhall not ſee my face." Among the heathens, when the beaſt was cut up for ſacrifice, the firſt thing the *prieſt* looked upon was the heart, and if that was unſound and naught, the ſacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious ſoever in other reſpects) offered him without a heart. He that performs duty without a heart, viz. heedleſsly, is no more accepted with God than he that performs it with a double heart, viz. hypocritically, Iſa. lxvi. 3. And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the duty, what is imported in this phraſe, "Keep thy heart."

2. Next I ſhall give you ſome rational account why Chriſtians ſhould make this the great buſineſs of their lives to keep their hearts.

The importance and neceſſity of making this our great and main buſineſs, will manifeſtly appear in that, 1. The honour of God; 2. The ſincerity of our profeſſion; 3. the beauty of our converſation; 4. The comfort of our ſouls; 5. The improvement of our graces; and, 6. Our ſtability in the hour of temptation; all are wrapt up in, and dependent on our ſincerity and care in the management of this work.

1. The glory of God is much concerned therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The ſchools do well obſerve, that outward ſins are *majoris infamæ*, ſins of greater infamy; but heart-ſins are *majoris reatus*, ſins of deeper guilt. How ſeverely hath the great God declared his wrath from heaven againſt heart-wickedneſs; the great crime for which the old world ſtands indicted, Gen. vi. 5, 6, 7. is heart-wickedneſs. "God ſaw that every imagination (or fic-"tion) of their heart was only evil, and that continually;" for which

he ſent the dreadfuleſt judgment that was ever executed ſince the world began: "And the Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy man whom I have "created from the face of the earth, both man and beaſt, and the "creeping things, and the fowls of heaven, for it repenteth me that "I have made man," ver. 7. We find not their murders, adulteries, blaſphemies, (though they were defiled with theſe) particularly alledged againſt them; but the evils of their hearts: Yea, that which God was ſo provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemy's hand, was the evil of their hearts, Jer. iv. 14. "O Je-"ruſalem, waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be "ſaved; how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" The wickedneſs and vanity of their thoughts God took ſpecial notice of; and becauſe of this the Chaldean muſt come upon them as a *lion from his thicket*, ver. 7. *and tear them to pieces*. For the very ſin of thoughts it was that God threw down the fallen angels from heaven, and keeps them ſtill in everlaſting chains to the judgment of the great day; by which expreſſion is not obſcurely intimated ſome extraordinary judgment to which they are reſerved, as priſoners that have moſt irons laid upon them, may be ſuppoſed to be the greateſt malefactors: And what was their ſin? Why, only ſpiritual wickedneſs! For they, having no bodily organs, could act nothing externally againſt God. Yea, mere heart-evils are ſo provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that ſome men perform unto him, Iſa. lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox is as if he ſlew a man; he that ſacrificeth "a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an obla-"tion, as if he offered ſwines blood; he that burneth incenſe, as if "he bleſſed an idol." In what words could the abhorrence of a creature's actions be more fully expreſſed by the holy God? Murder and idolatry are not more vile in his account, than their ſacrifices, though materially ſuch as himſelf appointed: And what made them ſo? The following words inform us, "their ſoul delighteth in their "abominations."

To conclude, ſuch is the vileneſs of mere heart-ſins, that the ſcriptures ſometimes intimate the difficulty of pardon for them. So in the caſe of Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God; the apoſtle bids him "repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be "forgiven him." O then, never ſlight heart-evils; for by theſe God is highly wronged and provoked; and for this reaſon let every Chriſtian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The ſincerity of our profeſſion much depends upon the care and conſcience we have in keeping our hearts; for it is moſt certain, that a man is but an hypocrite in his profeſſion, how curious ſoever he be in the externals of religion, that is heedleſs and careleſs of the frame of his heart: You have a pregnant inſtance of this in the caſe of Jehu, 2 Kings x. 31. "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the ways of the "Lord God of Iſrael with his heart." That context gives us an ac-

count of the great ſervice performed by Jehu againſt the houſe of Ahab and Baal, as alſo of a great temporal reward given him by God for that ſervice, even that his children, to the fourth generation, ſhould ſit upon the throne of Iſrael. And yet, in theſe words, Jehu is cenſured for an hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the perſon that did it as hypocritical: And wherein lay his hypocriſy? but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart, i. e. he did all inſincerely, and for ſelf-ends; and though the work he did was materially good, yet he, not purging his heart from thoſe unworthy ſelf-deſigns in doing it, was an hypocrite; And Simon, of whom we ſpake before, though he appeared ſuch a perſon, that the apoſtle could not regularly refuſe him; yet his hypocriſy was quickly diſcovered: And what diſcovered it but this, that though he profeſſed and aſſociated himſelf with the ſaints, yet he was a ſtranger to the mortification of heart ſins? "Thy heart is not right with God," Acts viii. 21. It is true there is a great difference among Chriſtians themſelves, in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; ſome are more converſant and ſucceſsful in it than others are; but he that takes no heed to his heart, that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a hypocrite, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. "And they come unto thee as "the people cometh, and ſit before thee (as my people) and they "hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouths "they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſ-"neſs." Here were a company of formal hypocrites, as is evident by that expreſſion *(as my people)* like them, but not of them. And what made them ſo? Their outſide was fair; here were reverend poſtures, high profeſſions, much ſeeming joy and delight in ordinances, "Thou art to them as a lovely ſong:" yea, but for all that they kept not their hearts with God in thoſe duties, their hearts were commanded by their luſts, they went after their covetouſneſs; had they kept their hearts with God, all had been well; but not regarding which way their hearts went in duty, there lay the core of their hypocriſy.

*Objection.* If any upright ſoul ſhould hence infer, then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty; do what I can, yet I cannot hold it cloſe with God.

*Solution.* To this I anſwer, The very objection carries in it its own ſolution. Thou ſayeſt, do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou doſt what thou canſt, thou haſt the bleſſing of an upright, though God ſees good to exerciſe thee under the affliction of a diſcompoſed heart. There remains ſtill ſome wildneſs in the thoughts and fancies of the beſt to humble them; but if you find a care before to prevent them, and oppoſition againſt them when they come, grief and ſorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from reigning hypocriſy.

(1.) This fore-care is ſeen partly in laying up the word in thine

heart to prevent them, Pſal. cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in mine "heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee:" partly in our endeavours to engage our hearts to God, Jer. xxx. 21. and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our onſets upon duty, Pſal. cxix. 36, 37. it is a good ſign where this care goes before a duty.

And, (2.) It is a ſweet ſign of uprightneſs to oppoſe them in their firſt riſe, Pſal. cxix. 113. "I hate vain thoughts," Gal. v. 17. "The ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh."

And, (3.) Thy after-grief diſcovers thy upright heart. If, with Hezekiah, thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou haſt no reaſon, from thoſe diſorders, to queſtion the integrity of it; but to ſuffer ſin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a ſad and dangerous ſymptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our converſation ariſes from the heavenly frame and holy order of our ſpirits; there is a ſpiritual luſtre and beauty in the converſation of ſaints; "The righteous is more excellent than "his neighbour," they ſhine as the lights of the world; but whatever luſtre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their ſpirits; as the candle within puts a luſtre upon the lanthorn in which it ſhines. It is impoſſible that a diſordered and neglected heart ſhould ever produce well-ordered converſation; and ſince (as the text obſerves) the iſſues or ſtreams of life flow out of the heart as their fountain, it muſt needs follow, that ſuch as the heart is, the life will be: hence 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. "Abſtain from fleſhly luſts,—hav-"ing your converſation honeſt," * or *beautiful*, as the Greek word imports. So Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the "unrighteous man his thoughts." His way notes the courſe of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart; and therefore ſince the way and courſe of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forſaken: the heart is the womb of all actions, theſe actions are virtually and ſeminally contained in our thoughts, theſe thoughts being once made up into affections, are quickly made up into ſuitable actions and practices. If the heart be wicked, then, as Chriſt ſaith, Matth. xv. 19. "Out of the heart pro-"ceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," &c. Mark the order; firſt, wanton, or revengeful thoughts, then unclean or murderous practices.

And if the heart be holy and ſpiritual, then, as David ſpeaks, from ſweet experience, Pſal. xlv. 1. "My heart is (inditing) a good mat-"ter, I ſpeak of things which (I have made,) my tongue is as the "pen of a ready writer." Here is a life richly beautified with good works, ſome ready made; "I will ſpeak of the things which I have "made;" others upon the wheel making, my heart is inditing, but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

* Καλην.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly diſcover that it is ſo. I think it is not very difficult to diſcern, by the duties and converſes of Chriſtians, what frames their ſpirits are under; take a Chriſtian in a good frame, and how ſerious, heavenly, and profitable, will his converſes and duties be! what a lovely companion is he during the continuance of it! It would do any one's heart good to be with him at ſuch a time, Pſal. xxxvii. 30, 31. "The mouth of the righte-" ous ſpeaketh wiſdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the law " of his God is in his heart.

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterouſly and ingeniouſly will he wind in ſpiritual diſcourſe, improving every occaſion and advantage to ſome heavenly purpoſe? Few words run then at the waſte ſpout.

And what elſe can be the reaſon why the diſcourſes and duties of many Chriſtians are become ſo frothy, and unprofitable, their communion both with God, and one another, becomes as a dry ſtalk, but becauſe their hearts are neglected? Surely this muſt be the reaſon of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed; for want of this Chriſtian-fellowſhip, it is become a ſapleſs thing; ſo the attracting beauty that was wont to ſhine from the converſations of the ſaints upon the faces and conſciences of the world, (which, if it did not allure, and bring them in love with the ways of God, yet at the leaſt left a teſtimony in their conſciences of the excellency of thoſe men and their ways) this is in a great meaſure loſt, to the unſpeakable detriment of religion.

Time was, when Chriſtians did carry it at ſuch a rate, that the world ſtood at a gaze at them, as the word ξενιζονται, 1 Pet. iv. 4. imports. Their life and language were of a different ſtrain from others, their tongues diſcovered them to be Galileans, wherever they came; but now, ſince vain ſpeculations and fruitleſs controverſies have ſo much obtained, and heart-work, practical godlineſs, ſo much neglected among profeſſors, the caſe is ſadly altered; their diſcourſe is become like other men's: if they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, Acts ii. 6.) "hear every man ſpeak in his own " language." And truly I have little hope to ſee this evil redreſſed, and the credit of religion again repaired, till Chriſtians fall to their old work; till they ply heart-work cloſer: when the ſalt of heavenly-mindedneſs is caſt into the ſpring, the ſtreams will run clearer, and ſweeter.

4. The comfort of our ſouls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts; for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is (ordinarily) a great ſtranger to aſſurance, and the ſweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the Antinomian doctrine were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and ſigns for the trial of your conditions, telling you it is only the Spirit that immediately aſſures you, by witneſſing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careleſs of

your hearts, yea, ſtrangers to them, and yet no ſtrangers to comfort: but ſince both ſcripture and experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unſcriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spirit, to aſſure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain aſſurance, in the ordinary way wherein God diſpenſes it, you muſt take pains with your own hearts; you may expect your comforts upon eaſier terms, but I am miſtaken if ever you enjoy them upon any other; "Give all "diligence, prove yourſelves;" this is the ſcripture way. I remember Mr Roberts, in his Treatiſe of the covenant, tells us, that he knew a Chriſtian, who in the infancy of his Chriſtianity, ſo vehemently panted after the infallible aſſurance of God's love, that for a long time together he earneſtly deſired ſome voice from heaven, yea, ſometimes walking in the ſolitary fields, earneſtly deſired ſome miraculous voice from the trees and ſtones there: this, after many deſires and longings, was denied him; but in time a better was afforded in the ordinary way of ſearching the word, and his own heart. An inſtance of the like nature the learned Gerſon gives us of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of deſperation; at laſt being ſweetly ſettled, and aſſured, one aſked him how he attained it? He anſwered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by any extraordinary revelation, but by ſubjecting his underſtanding to the ſcriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The Spirit, indeed, aſſures by witneſſing our adoption; and he witneſſeth two ways.

(1.) Objectively, i. e. by working thoſe graces in our ſouls which are the conditions of the promiſe, and ſo the Spirit and his graces in us, are all one: the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be diſcerned in his eſſence, but in his operations; and to diſcern theſe, is to diſcern the Spirit; and how theſe ſhould be diſcerned, without ſerious ſearching, and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine.

(2.) The other way of the Spirit's witneſſing is effectively, i. e. by irradiating the ſoul with a grace-diſcovering light, ſhining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work; he firſt infuſes the grace, and then opens the eye of the ſoul to ſee it. Now ſince the heart is the ſubject of that infuſed grace, even this way of the Spirit's witneſſing alſo includes the neceſſity of keeping carefully our own hearts: For,

(1.) A neglected heart is ſo confuſed and dark, that the little grace which is in it, is not ordinarily diſcernible: the moſt accurate and laborious Chriſtians, that take moſt pains, and ſpend moſt time about their hearts, do yet find it very difficult to diſcover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there: how then ſhall the Chriſtian who is (comparatively) negligent and remiſs about heart-work, be ever able to diſcover it? Sincerity, which is the *quæſitum*, the thing ſought for, lies in the heart like a ſmall piece of gold in the bottom of a river, he that will find it, muſt ſtay till the water is

clear, and settled, and then he shall see it sparkling at the bottom. And that the heart may be clear, and settled, how much pains and watching, care and diligence, will it cost?

(2.) God doth not usually indulge lazy and negligent souls with the comforts of assurance; he will not so much as seem to patronize sloth and carelessness; he will give it, but it shall be in his own way: his command hath united our care and comfort together; they are mistaken that think the beautiful child of assurance may be born without pangs: ah, how many solitary hours have the people of God spent in heart-examination! how many times have they looked into the word, and then into their hearts? Sometimes they thought they discovered sincerity, and were even ready to draw forth the triumphant conclusion of assurance; then comes a doubt they cannot resolve, and dashes all again: many hopes and fears, doubtings and reasoning, they have had in their own breasts, before they arrived at a comfortable settlement.

To conclude, suppose it possible for a careless Christian to attain assurance, yet it is impossible he should long retain it: For, as for those whose hearts are filled with the joys of assurance, if extraordinary care be not used, it is a thousand to one if ever they long enjoy it: for a little pride, vanity, carelessness, will dash to pieces all that for which they have been labouring a long time, in many a weary duty. Since, then, the joy of our life, the comfort of our souls, rises and falls with our diligence in this work, keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The improvement of our graces depends upon the keeping our hearts; I never knew grace thrive in a negligent and careless soul: the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flourishing grace is. In Eph. iii. 17. we read of "being rooted in grace;" grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, Psal. cxvi. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 13. It is true, Christ is the root of a Christian; but Christ is *origo originans*, the originating root; and grace *origo originata*, a root originated, planted, and influenced by Christ; according as this thrives under divine influences, so the acts of grace are more or less fruitful, or vigorous. Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, these fructifying influences are stopt and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its strength; the heart is, as it were, the pasture, in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, Psal. cxxxix. 17. "How precious are thy thoughts to me, "O God! how great is the sum of them? If I should count them, "they are more in number than the sand; and when I awake, I am "still with thee." And as the gracious heart feeds and nourishes them, so they refresh and feast the heart, Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. "My

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" ſoul is filled as with marrow and fatneſs whilſt I think upon thee," &c. But in the diſregarded heart, ſwarms of vain and fooliſh thoughts are perpetually working, and juſtle out thoſe ſpiritual ideas, and thoughts of God, by which the ſoul ſhould be refreſhed.

Beſides, the careleſs heart makes nothing out of any duty or ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet theſe are the conduits of heaven, from whence grace is watered and made fruitful: a man may go with an heedleſs ſpirit from ordinance to ordinance, abide all his days under the choiceſt teaching, and yet never be improved by them; for heart-neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich ſoever, abide in that ſoul, Mat. xiii. 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common, like the high-way, free for all paſſengers; when the ſeed fell on it, the fowls came and devoured it. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unleſs we take heed how we hear; a man may pray, and never be the better, unleſs he watch unto prayer. In a word, all ordinances, means, and duties, are bleſſed unto the improvement of grace, according to the care and ſtrictneſs we uſe in keeping our hearts in them.

6. *Laſtly*, The ſtability of our ſouls in the hour of temptation, will be much according to the care and conſcience we have of keeping our hearts; the careleſs heart is an eaſy prey to Satan in the hour of temptation, his main batteries are raiſed againſt that fort-royal, the heart; if he wins that, he wins all; for it commands the whole man: and, alas! how eaſy a conqueſt is a neglected heart? It is no more difficult to ſurprize it, than for an enemy to enter that city whoſe gates are open and unguarded: it is the watchful heart that diſcovers and ſuppreſſes the temptation before it comes to its ſtrength. Divines obſerve this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full ſtrength.

There is, (1.) Ορεξις, The irritation of the object, or that power it hath to work upon, and provoke our corrupt nature; which is either done by the real preſence of the object, or elſe by ſpeculation, when the object (though abſent) is held out by the phantaſy before the ſoul.

(2.) Then follows Ορμη, the motion of the ſenſitive appetite, which is ſtirred and provoked by the phantaſy, repreſenting it as a ſenſual good, as having profit or pleaſure in it.

(3.) Then there is Βουλησις, a conſultation in the mind about it, deliberating about the likelieſt means of accompliſhing it.

(4.) Next follows Αιρησις, the election, or choice of the will.

(5.) And laſtly Βουλημα, The deſire, or full engagement of the will to it; all this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the ſoul are quick, and ſoon ended: when it comes thus far, then the heart is won, Satan hath entered victorioufly, and diſplayed his colours upon the walls of that royal fort; but had the heart been well guarded at firſt, it had never come to this height: the temptation had been ſtopped in the firſt or ſecond act. And indeed there

it is stopped easily: for it is the motions of a tempted soul to sin, as in the motion of a stone falling from the brow of a hill; it is easily stopped at first, but when once it is set agoing, *Vires acquirit eundo*: And therefore it is the greatest wisdom in the world to observe the first motions of the heart, to check and stop sin there. The motions of sin are weakest at first, a little care and watchfulness may prevent much mischief now, which the careless heart not heeding, is brought within the power of temptation; as the Syrians were brought blindfold into the midst of Samaria, before they knew where they were.

By this time, reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a work the keeping of the heart is, it being a duty that wraps up so many dear interests of the soul in it.

3. Next, according to the method propounded, I proceed to point out those special seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost diligence in keeping the heart: for though (as we observed before) the duty binds *ad semper*, and there is no time or condition of life in which we may be excused from this work; yet there are some signal seasons, critical hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the first,

1. *Season.* 'Is the time of prosperity, when providence smiles upon us, and dandles us upon its knee. Now, Christian, keep thy heart with all diligence; for now it will be exceeding apt to grow secure, proud, and earthly, *Rara virtus est humilitas honorata*, (saith Bernard) to see a man humble under prosperity, is one of the greatest rarities in the world. Even a good Hezekiah could not hide a vain-glorious temper under his temptation, and hence that caution to Israel, Deut. vi. 10, 11, 12. "And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware to thy fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, &c. Then beware lest thou forget the Lord:" and indeed so it fell out, "for Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked," Deut. xxxii. 15.'

Now then, the first case will be this, viz.

Case 1. *How a Christian may keep his heart from pride and carnal security, under the smiles of providence, and confluence of creature-comforts.*

There are seven choice helps to secure the heart from the dangerous snares of prosperity; the first is this,

1. *To consider the dangerous ensnaring temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous condition; few, yea, very few of those that live in the pleasures and prosperity of this world, escape everlasting perdition*, Math. xix. 24. "It is easier (saith Christ) for a camel to pass through the eye "of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of hea-"ven;" and 1 Cor. i. 26. "Not many mighty, not many noble are

" called." It might juſtly make us tremble when the ſcripture tells us in general, that few ſhall be ſaved; much more when it tells us, that of that rank and ſort of which we are ſpeaking, but few ſhall be ſaved. When Joſhua called all the tribes of Iſrael to lot upon them for the diſcovery of Achan, doubtleſs Achan feared; when the tribe of Judah was taken, his fear increaſed; but when the family of the Zarhites was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the ſcripture comes ſo near as to tell us that of ſuch a ſort of men very few ſhall eſcape, it is time to look about; *Miror ſi poteſt ſervari aliquis rectorum*, ſaith Chryſoſtom; I ſhould wonder if any of the *rulers* be ſaved. O how many have been coached to hell in the chariots of earthly pleaſures, while others have been whipped to heaven by the rod of affliction! how few, like the daughter of Tyre, come to Chriſt with a gift! how few among the rich intreat his favour!

2. *It may keep us yet more humble and watchful in proſperity, if we conſider, that among Chriſtians many have been much the worſe for it.* How good had it been for ſome of them, if they had never known proſperity! When they were in a low condition, how humble, ſpiritual, and heavenly, were they! but when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their ſpirits? It was ſo with Iſrael, when they were in a low condition in the wilderneſs; then Iſrael was *holineſs to the Lord*, Jer. ii. 23. but when they came into Canaan, and were fed in a fat paſture, then, " we are lords, we will come no more unto " thee," ver. 31. Outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward loſſes; as in a low condition their civil employments were wont to have a tang and ſavour of their duties, ſo in an exalted condition their duties commonly have a tang of the world. He indeed is rich in grace, whoſe graces is not hindered by his riches; there are but few Jehoſhaphats in the world, of whom it is ſaid, 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6. " He had ſilver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up " in the way of God's commands:" Will not this keep thy heart humble in proſperity, to think how dear many godly men have paid for their riches, that through them they have loſt that which all the world cannot purchaſe? Then, in the next place,

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this conſideration, *that God values no man a jot the more for theſe things.* God values no man by outward excellencies, but by inward graces: they are the internal ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great price in God's eyes, 1 Pet. iii. 4. He deſpiſes all wordly glory, and accepts no man's perſon; " but in " every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is " accepted of him," Acts x. 35. Indeed, if the judgment of God went by the ſame rule that man's doth, we might value ourſelves by theſe things, and ſtand upon them: But as one ſaid (when dying) I ſhall not appear before God as a doctor, but as a man; *tantus quiſque eſt, quantus eſt apud Deum.* So much every man is, and no more, as

he is in the judgment of God. Doth thy heart yet ſwell? And will neither of the former conſiderations keep it humble?

4. Then, *fourthly*, Conſider, *how bitterly many perſons have bewailed their folly when they came to die, that ever they ſet their hearts upon theſe things, and heartily wiſhed that they had never known them.* What a ſad ſtory was that of Pius Quintus, who dying, cried out deſparingly, when I was in a low condition, I had ſome hopes of ſalvation; but when I was advanced to be a Cardinal, I greatly doubted it; but ſince I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Mr Spencer alſo tells us a real, but ſad ſtory, of a rich oppreſſor, who had ſcraped up a great eſtate for his only ſon; when he came to die, he called his ſon to him, and ſaid, ſon, do you indeed love me? The ſon anſwered, that nature, beſides his paternal indulgence, obliged him to that. Then, ſaid the father, expreſs it by this; hold thy finger in the candle as long as I am ſaying a *pater noſter:* The ſon attempted, but could not endure it. Upon that the father broke out into theſe expreſſions, thou canſt not ſuffer the burning of thy finger for me, but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my ſoul for thee, and muſt burn body and ſoul in hell for thy ſake: Thy pain would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The heart may be kept humble, by conſidering *of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a ſoul heartily engaged in the way to heaven;* they ſhut out much of heaven from us at preſent, though they may not ſhut us out of heaven at laſt. If thou conſider thyſelf under the notion of a ſtranger in this world, travelling for heaven, and ſeeking a better country, thou haſt then as much reaſon to be taken, and delighted with theſe things, as a weary horſe hath with a heavy clog-bag: There was a ſerious truth in that atheiſtical ſcoff of Julian when he took away the Chriſtians eſtates, and told them it was to make them fitter for the kingdom of heaven.

6. Is thy ſpirit, for all this, flatulent and lofty? Then urge upon it *the conſideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein, according to our receipts of mercies, ſhall be our accompts for them:* And methinks this ſhould awe and humble the vaineſt heart that ever was in the breaſt of a ſaint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning to the end of thy life. Mic. vi. 5. "Remember, O my people, from Shittim unto Gilgal," &c. yea, they are exactly numbered, and recorded in order to an account; and thy account will be ſuitable. Luke xii. 48. "To whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required." You are but ſtewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; and what a great account have you to make, who have much of this world in your hand? What ſwift witneſſes will your mercies be againſt you, if this be the beſt fruits of them?

7. It is a very humbling conſideration, *that the mercies of God ſhould work otherwiſe upon my ſpirit, than they uſe to do upon the ſpirits of others to whom they come as ſanctified mercies from the love of God.* Ah Lord

what a sad consideration is this! enough to lay me in the dust; when I consider,

(1.) That their mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God has raised them, the lower they have laid themselves before God. Thus did Jacob, when God had given him much substance. Gen. xxxii. 10. "And Jacob said, I am not worthy of the least of all "thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto "thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now "I am become two bands." And thus it was with holy David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. When God had confirmed the promise to him, to build him a house, and not reject him as he did Saul, he goes in before the Lord, and saith, "Who am I? and what is my father's house, "that thou hast brought me hitherto?" And so indeed God required, Deut. xxvi. 5. when Israel was to bring to God the first-fruits of Canaan, they were to say, "A Syrian ready to perish was my fa-"ther," &c. Do others raise God the higher for the raising them? And the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him, and exalt myself? O what a sad thing is this!

(2.) Others have freely ascribed the glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified not themselves, but him, for their mercies: So David, 2 Sam. vii. 26. "Let thy name be magnified, and the "house of thy servant be established." He doth not fly upon the mercy, and suck out the sweetness of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except God be magnified in it. So Psalm xviii. 2. when God had delivered him from all his enemies, "The Lord (saith he) is my strength, and my rock, he is "become my salvation." They did not put the crown upon their own heads, as I do.

(3.) The mercies of God have been melting mercies unto others, melting their souls in love to the God of their mercies. So Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1. when she received the mercy of a son, "My soul (saith "she) rejoiceth in the Lord;" not in the mercy, but in the God of the mercy. And so Mary, Luke i. 46: "My soul doth magnify the "Lord, my Spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." The word signifies to make more room for God; their hearts were not contracted, but the more enlarged to God.

(4.) The mercies of God have been mighty restraints to keep others from sin. So Ezra ix. 13. "Seeing thou, our God, hast given us "such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy command-"ments?" Ingenuous souls have felt the force of the obligations of love and mercy upon them.

(5.) To conclude, The mercies of God to others have been as oil to the wheels of their obedience, and made them fitter for services, 2 Chron. xvii. 5. Now if mercies work contrarily upon my heart, what cause have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love? I tell you, this is enough to damp the spirit of any saint, to see what sweet effects they have had on others, and what sad effects on him.

2. *Seaſon*, 'The ſecond ſpecial ſeaſon in the life of a chriſtian re-'quiring more than a common diligence to keep his heart, is *the 'time of adverſity:* When providence frowns upon you, and blaſts 'your outward comforts, then look to your hearts, keep them with 'all diligence from repining againſt God, or fainting under his 'hand; for troubles, though ſanctified, are troubles ſtill; even 'ſweet-brier, and holy thiſtle, have their prickles. Jonah was a 'good man, and yet how pettiſh was his heart under affliction? Job 'was the mirror of patience, yet how was his heart diſcompoſed by 'trouble? You will find it as hard to get a compoſed ſpirit under 'great afflictions, as it is to fix quick-ſilver. O the hurries and tu-'mults which they occaſion even in the beſt hearts! Well, then, 'the ſecond caſe will be this:'

Caſe 2. *How a Chriſtian under great afflictions may keep his heart from repining, or deſponding under the hand of God?* Now there are nine ſpecial helps I ſhall here offer, to keep thy heart in this condition; and the firſt ſhall be this, to work upon your hearts this great truth,

1. *That by theſe croſs providences, God is faithfully purſuing the great deſign of electing love upon the ſouls of his people, and orders all theſe afflictions as means ſanctified to that end.*

Afflictions fall not out by caſualty, but by counſel, Job v. 6. Eph. i. 11. by this counſel of God they are ordained as means of much ſpiritual good to ſaints, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this ſhall the iniquity of "Jacob be purged," &c. Heb. xii. 10. "But he for our profit," &c. Rom. viii. 28. "All things work together for good." They are God's workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal ſecurity of them; and being ſo, their nature is changed; they are turned into bleſſings and benefits, Pſalm cxix. 71. "It is good "for me that I have been afflicted." And ſure, then, thou haſt no reaſon to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God ſhould concern himſelf ſo much in thy good, to uſe any means for the accompliſhing of it. Philip. iii. 11. "Paul could bleſs God, if by any "means he might attain the reſurrection of the dead. My brethren, "(ſaith James) count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations," Jam. i. 2, 3. My father is about a deſign of love upon my ſoul, and do I well to be angry with him? All that he doth is in purſuance of, and in reference to ſome eternal, glorious ends upon my ſoul. O it is my ignorance of God's deſign, that makes me quarrel with him! he ſaith to thee in this caſe, as to Peter, "What I do thou knoweſt "not now, but hereafter thou ſhalt know it,"

Help. 2. *Though God hath reſerved to himſelf a liberty of afflicting his people, yet he hath tied up his own hands by promiſe, never to take away his loving-kindneſs from them.* Can I look that ſcripture in the face with a repining, diſcontented ſpirit, 2 Sam. vii. 14, "I ſhall be his father, and he will be my ſon; if he commit iniquity, "I will chaſten him with the rod of men, and with the ſtripes of

" the children of men: Nevertheleſs, my mercy ſhall not depart " away from him." O my heart! my haughty heart! doſt thou well to be diſcontented, when God hath given thee the whole tree, with all the cluſters of comfort growing on it, becauſe he ſuffers the wind to blow down a few leaves; Chriſtians have two ſorts of goods, the goods of the throne, and the goods of the footſtool; moveables, and immoveables: If God have ſecured theſe, never let my heart be troubled at the loſs of thoſe; indeed, if he had cut off his love, or diſcovenanted my ſoul, I had reaſon to be caſt down; but this he hath not, nor can he do it.

*Help* 3. It is of marvellous efficacy to keep the heart from ſinking under affliction, *to call to mind, that thine own father hath the ordering of them:* Not a creature moves hand or tongue againſt thee, but by his permiſſion. Suppoſe the cup be a bitter cup, yet it is the cup which thy father hath given thee to drink; and canſt thou ſuſpect poiſon to be in that cup which he delivers thee? Fooliſh man, put home the caſe to thine own heart, conſult with thine own bowels; canſt thou find in thy heart to give thy child that which would hurt, or undo him? No, thou wouldſt as ſoon hurt thy ſelf as him; " If " thou then being evil knoweſt how to give good gifts to thy child- " ren," how much more doth God? Matth. vii. 11. The very conſideration of his nature, a God of love, pity, and tender mercies, or of his relation to thee as a Father, Huſband, Friend, might be ſecurity enough, if he had not ſpoken a word, to quiet thee in this caſe; and yet you have his word too, Jer. xxv. 6. *I will do you no hurt.* You lie too near his heart to hurt you; nothing grieves him more than your groundleſs and unworthy ſuſpicions of his deſigns do; would it not grieve a faithful, tender-hearted phyſician when he hath ſtudied the caſe of his patient, prepared the moſt excellent receipts to ſave his life, to hear him cry out, O he hath undone me! he hath poiſoned me; becauſe it gripes and pains him in the operation? O when will you be ingenuous!

Help 4. *God reſpects you as much in a low, as in a high condition; and therefore it need not ſo much trouble you to be made low:* nay, to ſpeak home, he manifeſts more of his love, grace, and tenderneſs, in the time of affliction, than 'proſperity. As God did not at firſt chuſe you becauſe you were high, ſo he will not forſake you becauſe you are low: Men may look ſhy upon you, and alter their reſpects, as your condition is altered. When providence hath blaſted your eſtates, your ſummer friends may grow ſtrange, as fearing you may be troubleſome to them; but will God do ſo? No, no! " I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. Indeed if adverſity and poverty could bar you from acceſs to God, it were a ſad condition; but you may go to God as freely as ever. " My God (ſaith the church) will hear me," Mic. vii, 7. Poor David, when ſtripped of all earthly comforts, could yet encourage himſelf in the Lord his God; and why can-

not you? Suppoſe your huſband or child had loſt all at ſea, and ſhould come to you in rags; could you deny the relation, or refuſe to entertain him? If you would not, much leſs would God: Why then are you ſo troubled? Though your condition be changed, your Father's love and reſpects are not changed.

Help 5. *And what if by the loſs of outward comforts, God will preſerve your ſouls from the ruining power of temptation? Sure then, you have little cauſe to ſink your hearts by ſuch ſad thoughts about them.* Are not theſe earthly enjoyments the things that make men ſhrink and warp in times of trial? For the love of theſe many have forſaken Chriſt in ſuch an hour, Matth. xix. 22. "He went away ſorrowful, "for he had great poſſeſſions." And if this be God's deſign, what have I done in quarrelling with him about it? We ſee mariners in a ſtorm can throw over-board rich bales of ſilk, and precious things, to preſerve the veſſel and their lives with it, and every one ſaith they act prudently; we know it is uſual for ſoldiers in a city beſieged, to batter down, or burn the faireſt buildings without the walls, in which the enemy may ſhelter in the ſiege; and no man doubts but it is wiſely done: Such as have gangrened legs or arms, can willingly ſtretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the chirurgeon for his pains: And muſt God only be repined at, for caſting over what will ſink you in a ſtorm? For pulling down that which would advantage your enemy in the ſiege of temptation? For cutting off what would endanger your everlaſting life? O inconſiderate, ingrateful man! are not theſe things, for which thou grieveſt, the very things that have ruined thouſands of ſouls? Well, what Chriſt doth in this, thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou mayeſt.

*Help* 6. It would much ſtay the heart under adverſity, to conſider, *That God, by ſuch humbling providences, may be accompliſhing that for which you have long prayed and waited:* And ſhould you be troubled at that? Say, Chriſtian, haſt thou not many prayers depending before God upon ſuch accounts as theſe; that he would keep thee from ſin, diſcover to thee the emptineſs and inſufficiency of the creature; that he would kill and mortify thy luſts, that thy heart may never find reſt in any enjoyment but Chriſt? Why now, by ſuch humbling and impoveriſhing ſtrokes, God may be fulfilling thy deſire: Wouldſt thou be kept from ſin? Lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns.* Wouldſt thou ſee the creature's vanity? Thy affliction is a fair glaſs to diſcover it; for the vanity of the creature is never ſo effectually and ſenſibly diſcovered, as in our own experience of it. Wouldſt thou have thy corruptions mortified? This is the way; now God takes away the food and fuel that maintained them; for as proſperity begat and fed them, ſo adverſity, when ſanctified, is a mean to kill them. Wouldſt thou have thy heart to reſt no where but in the boſom of God? What better way canſt thou imagine providence ſhould take to accompliſh thy deſire, than by pul-

ling from under thy head, that ſoft pillow of creature delights on which thou reſtedſt before? And yet you fret at this, peeviſh child! how doſt thou exerciſe thy Father's patience? If he delay to anſwer thy prayers, thou art ready to ſay he regards thee not; if he do that which really anſwers the ſcope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedſt, thou quarrelleſt with him for that; as if inſtead of anſwering, he were croſſing all thy hopes and aims; is this ingenuous? Is it not enough that God is ſo gracious to do what thou deſireſt, but thou muſt be ſo impudent to expect he ſhould do it in the way which thou preſcribeſt.

*Help* 7. Again, It may ſtay thy heart, if thou conſider, *That in theſe troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didſt ſee the deſign of, thy ſoul would rejoice.* We, poor creatures, are bemiſted with much ignorance, and are not able to diſcern how particular providences work towards God's end; and therefore, like Iſrael in the wilderneſs, are often murmuring, becauſe Providence leads us about in a howling deſart, where we are expoſed to ſtraits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a city of habitations.* If you could but ſee how God, in his ſecret counſel, hath exactly laid the whole plot and deſign of thy ſalvation, even to the ſmalleſt means and circumſtances; this way, and by theſe means ſuch a one ſhall be ſaved, and by no other; ſuch a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order; they ſhall befal him thus, and thus they ſhall work for him: Could you, I ſay, but diſcern the admirable harmony of divine diſpenſations, their mutual relations to each other, together with the general reſpect and influence they all have unto the laſt end; of all the conditions in the world, you would chuſe that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of arras, made up of a thouſand ſhreds, which ſingle we know not what to make of, but put together, and ſtitched up orderly, they repreſent a beautiful hiſtory to the eye. As God works all things according to the counſel of his own will, ſo that the counſel of God hath ordained this as the beſt way to bring about thy ſalvation: Such a one hath a proud heart, ſo many humbling providences I appointed for him: ſuch a one an earthly heart, ſo many impoveriſhing providences for him: Did you but ſee this, I need ſay no more to ſupport the moſt dejected heart.

*Help* 8. Farther, It would much conduce to the ſettlement of your hearts, to conſider, *That by fretting and diſcontent, you do yourſelves more injury than all the afflictions you lie under could do;* your own diſcontent is that which arms your troubles with a ſting; it is you that make your burden heavy, by ſtruggling under it. Could you but lie quiet under the hand of God, your condition would be much eaſier and ſweeter than it is; *Impatiens ægrotus crudelem facit medicum.* This makes God lay on more ſtrokes, as a father will upon a ſtubborn child that receives not correction.

Beſides, it unfits the ſoul to pray over its troubles, or take in the ſenſe of that good which God intends by them: Affliction is a pill, which being wrapt up in patience and quiet ſubmiſſion, may be eaſily ſwallowed; but diſcontent chews the pill, and ſo embitters the ſoul: God throws away ſome comfort which he ſaw would hurt you, and you will throw away your peace after it; he ſhoots an arrow which ſticks in your clothes, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from ſin: and you will thruſt it onward to the piercing of your very hearts by deſpondency and diſcontent.

*Help* 9. Laſtly, If all this will not do, but thy heart, like Rachel, ſtill refuſes to be comforted, or quieted, then conſider one thing more, which, if ſeriouſly pondered, will doubtleſs do the work; and that is this, *Compare the condition thou art now in, and art ſo much diſſatisfied with, with that condition others are, and thyſelf deſerveſt to be in:* Others are roaring in flames, howling under the ſcourge of vengeance, and amongſt them I deſerve to be. O my ſoul! is this hell? Is my condition as bad as the damned? O what would thouſands now in hell give to change conditions with me! It is a famous inſtance which * Dr Taylor gives us of the duke of Conde; 'I have read '(ſaith he) that when the duke of Conde had entered voluntarily 'into the incommodities of a religious poverty, he was one day eſpi-'ed and pitied by a lord of Italy, who out of tenderneſs wiſhed him 'to be more careful and nutritive of his perſon. The good duke 'anſwered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provid-'ed of conveniencies, for I ſend an harbinger before me, who makes 'ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. 'The lord aſked him who was his harbinger? he anſwered, The 'knowledge of myſelf, and the conſideration of what I deſerve for 'my ſins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge 'I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided ſoever I find it, methinks 'it is ever better than I deſerve.' *Why doth the living man complain?* And thus the heart may be kept from deſponding, or repining under adverſity.

*Seaſon* 3. 'The third ſeaſon calling for more than ordinary dili-'gence to keep the heart, is the time of Zion's troubles: When the 'church, like the ſhip in which Chriſt and his diſciples were, is op-'preſſed, and ready to periſh in the waves of perſecution; then good 'ſouls are ready to ſink, and be ſhipwrecked too, upon the billows 'of their own fears. I confeſs moſt men rather need the ſpur than 'the reins in this caſe, and yet ſome ſit down as over-weighed with 'the ſenſe of the church's troubles. The loſs of the Ark coſt old Eli 'his life; the ſad poſture Jeruſalem lay in, made good Nehemiah's 'countenance change in the midſt of all the pleaſures and accommo-'dations of the court, Neh. ii. 2. Ah! this goes cloſe to honeſt 'hearts.'

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* Great Exemp. p. 310.

'But though God allow, yea, command the moſt awakened apprehenſions of theſe calamities, and in "ſuch a day call to mourning "weeping, and girding with ſackcloth," Iſa. xxii. 12. and ſeverely 'threaten the inſenſible, Amos vi. 1. yet it will not pleaſe him to 'ſee you ſit like penſive Elijah under the juniper-tree. 1 Kings 'xix. 4. "Ah Lord God! it is enough, take away my life alſo." 'No, mourners in Zion you may, and ought to be; but ſelf-tormentors you muſt not be; complain to God you may, but to complain 'of God, though but by an unſuitable carriage, and the language of 'your actions, you muſt not.'

*Caſe* 3. The third caſe that comes next to be ſpoken to is this; *How public and tender hearts may be relieved and ſupported when they are overweighed with the burdenſome ſenſe of Zion's troubles?* 'I grant, it is 'hard for him that preferreth Zion to his chief joy, to keep his heart 'that it ſink not below the due ſenſe of its troubles; and yet this 'ought, and may be done by the uſe of ſuch heart-eſtabliſhing directions as theſe.

Direction 1. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befals Zion, but by the permiſſion of Zion's God; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at laſt to his people.*

There is truly a principle of quietneſs in the permitting, as in the commanding will of God. See it in David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. "Let "him alone, it may be God hath bidden him:" And in Chriſt, John xix. 11. "Thou couldſt have no power againſt me, except it were "given thee from above;" it ſhould much calm our ſpirits that it is the will of God to ſuffer it; and had he not ſuffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very conſideration quieted Job, Eli, David, and Hezekiah; that the Lord did it was enough to them, and why ſhould it not be ſo to us? If the Lord will have Zion plowed as a field, and her goodly ſtones lie in the duſt; if it be his pleaſure that Antichriſt ſhall rage yet longer, and wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High; if it be his will that a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord God of hoſts ſhall be upon the valley of viſion, that the wicked ſhall devour the man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we ſhould conteſt with God? Fit it is that we ſhould be reſigned up to that will whence we proceeded, and that he that made us ſhould diſpoſe of us as he pleaſeth: he may do what ſeemeth him good without our conſent: doth poor man ſtand upon equal ground, that he ſhould capitulate with his Creator, or that God ſhould render him an account of any of his matters? It is every way as reaſonable we be content, however God diſpoſe of us, as that we be obedient to whatever he commands us.

But then, if we purſue this argument further by conſidering that God's permiſſions do all meet at laſt in the real good of his people, this will much more quiet our ſpirits. Do the enemies carry away the good figs, even the beſt among the people into captivity? This looks

like a ſad providence, but yet God ſends them thither for their good, Jer. xxiv. 5. Doth God take the Aſſyrian as a ſtaff in his hand to beat his people with? Thoſe blows are ſmart, and make them cry; but the end of his ſo doing is, "That he may accompliſh his whole "work upon mount Zion," Iſa. x. 12. If God can bring much good out of the worſt and greateſt evil of ſin, much more out of temporal afflictions; and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do ſo. For it is inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of a common agent to permit any thing, which he might prevent if he pleaſed, to croſs his great deſign and end; and can it be imagined that the moſt wiſe God ſhould do ſo?

Well then, as Luther told Melancthon, *Deſinat Philippus eſſe rector mundi*; ſo ſay I to you; Let infinite wiſdom, power, and love alone; for by theſe all creatures are ſwayed, and actions guided, in reference to the church; it is none of our work to rule the world, but to ſubmit to him that doth: *Non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ*; the motions of providence are all judicious, the wheels are full of eyes; it is enough that the affairs of Zion are in a good hand.

*Direction* 2. Ponder this heart-ſupporting truth, in reference to Zion's trouble: *That how many troubles ſoever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What! hath the Lord forſaken his churches? Hath he ſold them into the enemy's hand? doth he not regard what evil befals them? that our hearts ſink at this rate? Is it not too ſhameful an undervaluing of the great God, and too much magnifying of poor, impotent men, to fear and tremble at creatures, whilſt God is in the midſt of us? The church's enemies are many and mighty; let that be granted, yet that argument with which Caleb and Joſhua ſtrove to raiſe their own hearts, is of as much force now as it was then: "The "Lord is with us, fear them not," Numb. xiv. 9. The hiſtorian tells us, that when Antigonus over-heard his ſoldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, and ſo diſcouraging one another; he ſuddenly ſteps in among them with this queſtion, 'And how many '(ſaid he) do you reckon me for?' Diſcouraged ſouls, how many do you reckon the Lord for? Is he not an over match for all his enemies? Is not one Almighty more than many mighties? Doth his preſence ſtand for nothing with us? "If God be for us, who can be "againſt us?" Rom. viii. 31. What think you, was the reaſon of that great exploration Gideon made in Judges vi? He queſtions, ver. 12, 13. he deſires a ſign, ver. 17. and after that another, ver. 36. and what was the end of all this, but that he might be ſure the Lord was with him, and that he might but write this motto upon his enſign? "The ſword of the Lord, and of Gideon." So then, if you can be well aſſured the Lord is with his people, you will get thereby above all your diſcouragements: and that he is ſo, you need not, with him, deſire a ſign from heaven; lo, you have a ſign before you, even their marvellous preſervation amidſt all their enemies. If

God be not with his people, how is it they are not ſwallowed up quick? Do their enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? No, but there is an inviſible hand upon them. Well then, as it is Exod. xxxiii. 14. let his preſence give us reſt; and though the mountains be hurled into the ſea, though heaven and earth mingle together, fear not, God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved.

Direction 3. *Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition.* If a low and an afflicted ſtate in the world be really beſt for the church, then your dejections are not only irrational, but ungrateful; indeed, if you eſtimate the happineſs of the church by its worldly eaſe, ſplendour, and proſperity, then ſuch times will ſeem bad for it; but if you reckon its glory to conſiſt in its humility, faith, patience, and heavenly-mindedneſs, no condition in the world abounds with advantages for theſe, as an afflicted condition doth. It was not perſecutions and priſons, but worldlineſs and wantonneſs, that was the poiſon of the church: neither was it the earthly glory of its profeſſors, but the blood of its martyrs, that was the ſeed of the church. The power of godlineſs did never thrive better than in affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greateſt proſperity: when "we are left a poor and an afflicted people, then we learn to "truſt in the name of the Lord," Zeph. iii. 12. What ſay ye, ſirs? Is it indeed for the ſaint's advantage to be weaned from the love of, and delight in enſnaring worldly vanities! To be quickened, and pricked forward with more haſte to heaven, to have clearer diſcoveries of their own hearts, to be taught to pray more fervently, frequently, ſpiritually; to look and long for the reſt to come, more ardently? If theſe be for their advantage, experience teaches us, that no condition is ordinarily bleſſed with ſuch fruits as theſe, like an afflicted condition.

And is it well done, then, to repine and droop, becauſe your Father conſults more the advantage of your ſouls, than the pleaſing of your humours? Becauſe he will bring you a nearer way to heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleaſed ſo much to concern himſelf in your welfare? which is more than he will do for thouſands in the world, upon whom he will not lay a rod, or ſpend an affliction for their good, Hoſ. iv. 17. Matth. xv. 14. But alas! we judge by ſenſe, and reckon things good or evil, according to what we, for the preſent, can taſte and feel in them.

Direction 4. *Take heed that you overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidſt all their troubles.*

It is a pity that our tears, upon the account of our troubles, ſhould ſo blear and blind our eyes, that we ſhould not ſee our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not inſiſt upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniences and accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Chriſt and his precious ſervants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But what ſay you to pardon of ſin? intereſt in Chriſt? the covenant of promiſe? and an eternity of happineſs, in the preſence of God after a few days are over? O that ever a people entitled to ſuch mercies as theſe, ſhould droop under any temporal affliction, or be ſo much concerned for the frowns of men, and loſs of trifles! you have not the ſmiles of great men, but you have the favour of the great God; you are, it may be, caſt back in your eſtates, but thereby furthered in ſpirituals. You cannot live ſo bravely, plentifully, and eaſily, as before; but ſtill you may live as holy and heavenly as ever: will you then grieve ſo much for theſe circumſtantials, as to forget your ſubſtantials? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the church's true riches are laid out of the reach of all its enemies: they may make you poor, but not miſerable. What though God do not diſtinguiſh, in his outward diſpenſations, betwixt his own and others? Yea, what though his judgments ſingle out the beſt, and ſpare the worſt? What though an Abel be killed in love, and a Cain ſurvive in hatred; a bloody Dionyſius die in his bed, and a good Joſiah fall in battle? What though the belly of the wicked be filled with hidden treaſures, and the teeth of the ſaints broken with gravel-ſtones; yet ſtill here is much matter of praiſe; for electing love has diſtinguiſhed, though common providence did not; and whilſt proſperity and impunity ſlay the wicked, even ſlaying and adverſity ſhall benefit and ſave the righteous.

Direction 5. *Believe, that how low ſoever the church be plunged under the waters of adverſity, it ſhall aſſuredly riſe again.* Fear not, for as ſure as Chriſt aroſe the third day, notwithſtanding the ſeal and watch that were upon him; ſo ſure the church ſhall ariſe out of all her troubles, and lift up its victorious head over all its enemies: there is no fear of ruining that people who thrive by their loſſes, and multiply by being diminiſhed. O be not too quick to bury the church before ſhe is dead! ſtay till Chriſt hath tried his ſkill, before you give it up for loſt. The buſh may be all in a flame, but ſhall never be conſumed, and that becauſe of the good will of him that dwelleth in it.

Direction 6. *Record the famous inſtances of God's care and tenderneſs over his people in former ſtraits.* Chriſt hath not ſuffered it to be devoured yet; for above theſe 1700 years the Chriſtian church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not conſumed: many a wave of perſecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned: many deſigns to ruin it, and hitherto none have proſpered; this is not the firſt time that Hamans and Ahithophels have ploted its ruin; that an Herod hath ſtretched out his hand to vex it: ſtill it hath been preſerved from, ſupported under, or delivered out of all its troubles; and is it not as dear to God as ever? Is he not as able to ſave it now, as formerly? Though we know not whence deliverance ſhould ariſe, "Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of tempta-"tions," 2 Pet. ii. 9.

*Direction* 7. If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former arguments, then, in the laſt place *Try whether you cannot draw ſome comfort out of your very troubles.* Surely this trouble of yours is a good argument of your integrity; union is the ground of ſympathy; if you had not ſome rich adventure in that ſhip, you would not tremble as you do, when it is in danger: beſides, this frame of ſpirit may afford you this argument, that if you be ſenſible of the church's troubles, Jeſus Chriſt is much more ſenſible of, and ſolicitous about it, than you can be; and he will have an eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, Iſa. lvii. 18.

*Seaſon* 4. 'The fourth ſpecial ſeaſon of expreſſing our utmoſt diligence in keeping our hearts, is the time of danger and public diſtraction; in ſuch times the beſt hearts are but too apt to be ſurprized by ſlaviſh fear; it is not eaſy to ſecure the heart againſt diſtractions in times of common diſtraction. If Syria be confederate with Ephraim, how do the hearts of the houſe of David ſhake, even as the trees of the wood, which are ſhaken with the wind? Iſa. vii. 2. When there are ominous ſigns in the heaven; on the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity; the ſea and waves roaring, then the hearts of men fail for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth, Luke xxi. 25, 26. Even a Paul himſelf may "Sometimes complain of fightings within, when "there are fears without," 2 Cor. vii. 5.

But, my brethren, theſe things ought not to be ſo, ſaints ſhould be of a more raiſed ſpirit: So was David, when his heart was kept in a good frame, Pſal. xxvii. 1. "The Lord is my light, and my ſalvation; "whom ſhall I fear? The Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom "ſhall I be afraid?" Let none but the ſervants of ſin be the ſlaves of fear, let them that have delighted in evil, fear evil; *impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatened as a judgment upon the wicked, ever ſeize upon the breaſts of the righteous. "I will ſend (ſaith God) faintneſs into their hearts in the "land of their enemies, and the ſound of a ſhaking leaf ſhall chace "them," Lev. xxvi. 36. O what poor-ſpirited men are theſe, to fly at a ſhaking leaf! which makes a pleaſant, and not a terrible noiſe; and is in itſelf a kind of natural muſic: But to a guilty conſcience the whiſtling leaves are drums and trumpets. "But God hath not given "us the ſpirit of fear, but of love, and of a ſound mind," 2 Tim. i. 7. A ſound mind as it ſtands there in oppoſition to the ſpirit of fear, is an unwounded conſcience, not infirmed by guilt: And this ſhould make a man as bold as a lion. I know it cannot be ſaid of a ſaint what God ſpake of Leviathan, that he is made without fear: There is a natural fear in every man, and it is as impoſſible to be wholly put off as the body itſelf is: *It is a perturbation of the mind, ariſing from the apprehenſion of approaching danger;* and as long as dangers can approach us, we ſhall find ſome perturbations within us. It is not my purpoſe to commend to you a ſtoical apathy, nor yet to take you off from ſuch

a degree of cautional, preventive fear as may fit you for trouble, and be ſerviceable to your ſouls; there is a provident fear that opens our eyes to foreſee danger, and quickens to a prudent and lawful uſe of means to prevent it: Such was Jacob's fear, Gen. xxxii. 7, 9, 10. &c. But it is the fear of diffidence I perſuade you to keep your hearts from; that tyrannical paſſion which invades the heart in times of danger; diſtracts, weakens, aud unfits the heart for duty; drives men upon unlawful means, and brings a ſnare with it. Well then, the fourth caſe will be this:

Caſe 4. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from diſtracting and tormenting fears, in times of great and threatening dangers.*

Now there are fourteen excellent rules, or helps, for the keeping the heart from ſinful fear, when imminent dangers threaten us: And the firſt is this,

Rule 1. *Look upon all the creatures as in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions, limiting, reſtraining, and determining them all at his pleaſure.*

Get this truth well ſettled by faith in your hearts; it will marvellouſly guard them againſt ſlaviſh fears. The firſt chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable ſcheme, or draught of providence; there you may ſee the living creatures who move the wheels, viz. the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Chriſt, who ſits upon the throne, to receive new orders and inſtructions from him, ver. 24, 25, 26. And in Rev. vi. you read of white, black, and red horſes, which are nothing elſe but the inſtruments which God employs in executing his judgments in the world, as wars, peſtilence, and death: But when theſe horſes are prancing, and trampling up and down the world, here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the reins in his hand. Wicked men are ſometimes like mad horſes, they would ſtamp the people of God under their feet, but that the bridle of providence is in their lips, Job i. 11, 12. A lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the lion in the keeper's hand?

Rule 2. *Remember that this God, in whoſe hand all the creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you, than you are, or can be, over yourſelves:* "He that toucheth you, toucheth the "apple of mine eye," Zech. ii. 8. Let me aſk the moſt timorous woman, whether there be not a vaſt difference between the ſight of a drawn ſword in the hand of a bloody ruffian, and the ſame ſword in the hand of her own tender huſband? As great a difference there is in looking upon creatures by an eye of ſenſe, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an eye of faith; that is a ſweet ſcripture to this purpoſe, Iſa. liv. 5. "Thy Maker is thy Huſband, the "Lord of Hoſts is his name:" he is Lord of all the hoſts of creatures in the world: Who would be afraid to paſs through an army, though all the ſoldiers ſhould turn their ſwords and guns towards him, if

the general of that army were his friend, or father? I have met with an excellent ſtory of a religious young man, who being at ſea, with many other paſſengers, in a great ſtorm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was obſerved to be very cheerful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger: One of them demanding the reaſon of his cheerfulneſs 'O, (ſaid he) it is becauſe the pilot 'of the ſhip is my father.' Conſider Chriſt, firſt as the King, and ſupreme Lord over the providential kingdom, and then as your Head, Huſband, and Friend, and thou wilt quickly ſay, "Return unto thy "reſt, O my ſoul." This truth will make you ceaſe trembling, and cauſe you to ſing in the midſt of dangers. Pſalm xlvii. 7. "The "Lord is King of all the earth, ſing ye praiſe with underſtanding;" "(or, as the Hebrew word is,) Every one that hath underſtanding," viz. of this heart-reviving and eſtabliſhing doctrine of the dominion of our Father over all the creatures.

Rule 3. *Urge upon your hearts the expreſs prohibitions of Chriſt in this caſe: and let your hearts ſtand in awe of the violations of them.* He hath charged you not to fear, Luke xxi. 9. "When ye ſhall "hear of wars and commotions, ſee that ye be not terrified." And Phil. i. 28. "In nothing be terrified by your adverſaries." Yea, in Matth. x. 26, 28, 31. and within the compaſs of ſix verſes, our Saviour commands us thrice, *not to fear man.* Doth every big word of proud duſt and aſhes make thee afraid? Doth the voice of a man make thee tremble? and ſhall not the voice of God: If thou art of ſuch a fearful and timorous ſpirit, how is it that thou feareſt not to diſobey the flat commands of Jeſus Chriſt? Methinks the command of Chriſt ſhould have as much power to calm, as the voice of a poor worm to terrify thy heart. Iſa. li. 12, 13. "I, even I, am he that "comforteth you: Who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a "man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man that ſhall be made as "the graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker?" We cannot fear creatures ſinfully, till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath ſaid, we ſhould not be of ſuch feeble ſpirits: Bring thy heart, then, to this dilemma in times of danger; if I let into my heart the ſlaviſh fear of man, I muſt let out the reverential awe and fear of God; and dare I caſt off the fear of the Almighty for the frowns of a man? Shall I lift up proud duſt above the great God? Shall I run upon a certain ſin, to ſhun a probable danger? O keep thy heart by this conſideration!

Rule 4. *Remember how much needleſs trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and how you have diſquieted yourſelves to no purpoſe.*

Iſa. li. 13. "And haſt feared continually becauſe of the oppreſſor, "as if he were ready to devour; and where is the fury of the oppreſſor?" He ſeemed ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured: I have not brought upon you the thing that you feared; you have waſted your ſpirits, diſordered your ſouls, and weakened your hands,

and all this to no purpoſe: You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and poſſeſſed your ſouls in patience. And here I cannot but obſerve a very deep policy of Satan, managing a deſign againſt the ſoul by theſe vain fears: I call them vain, in regard of the fruſtration of them by Providence; but certainly they are not in vain, as to the end Satan aims at in raiſing them; for herein he acts as ſoldiers uſe to do in the ſiege of a garriſon, who on purpoſe to wear out the beſieged by conſtant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make reſiſtance when they ſtorm it in earneſt, do every night give them falſe alarms, which though they come to nothing, yet doth notably ſerve this further deſign of the enemy. O when will you beware of Satan's devices?

*Rule* 5. Conſider ſolemnly, *That though the things you fear ſhould really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear, than in the thing feared;*

And that not only as the leaſt evil of ſin is worſe than the greateſt evil of ſuffering; but as this ſinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it, than is in that condition you are ſo much afraid of: fear is both a multiplying and a tormenting paſſion; it repreſents troubles much greater than they are, and ſo tortures and wrecks the ſoul much worſe than when the ſuffering itſelf comes. So it was with Iſrael at the Red-ſea, they cried out, and were ſore afraid, till they put foot into the water, and then a paſſage was opened through thoſe waters, which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us; we looking through the glaſs of carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble, the ſwellings of Jordan, cry out, O they are unfordable! we muſt needs periſh in them: But when we come into the midſt of thoſe floods, indeed we find the promiſe made good; "God will "make a way to eſcape," 1 Cor. x. 13. Thus it was with bleſſed Bilney, when he would make a trial, by putting his finger to the candle, and not able to endure that, he cried out, 'What, cannot I 'bear the burning of a finger? how then ſhall I be able to bear the 'burning of my whole body to-morrow?' And yet when that morrow came, he could go cheerfully into the flames, with that ſcripture in his mouth, Iſa xliii. 1, 2, 3. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: "I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou paſs-"eſt through the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkeſt "through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt."

Rule 6. *Conſult the many precious promiſes which are written for your ſupport and comfort in all dangers.*

Theſe are your refuges to which you may fly and be ſafe; "When "the arrows of danger fly by night, and deſtruction waſteth at noon "day." There are particular promiſes ſuited to particular caſes and exigencies; and there are general promiſes, reaching all caſes and conditions: Such are theſe, Rom. viii. 28. "All things ſhall work toge-"gether for good," &c. And Eccleſ. viii. 12. "Though a ſinner "do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet it ſhall

" be well with them that fear the Lord." &c. " Could you but be-
" lieve the promiſes, your hearts ſhould be eſtabliſhed." 2 Chron. xx. 29. Could you but plead them with God, as Jacob did. Gen. xxxii. 12. " Thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good," &c. they would relieve you in every diſtreſs.

Objection. *But that promiſe was made perſonally, and by name to him, ſo are not theſe to me.*

*Anſwer.* If Jacob's God be your God, you have as good an intereſt in them as he had. The church, a thouſand years after that tranſaction betwixt God and Jacob, applied that which God ſpake to him, as if it had been ſpoken to themſelves, Hoſ. xii. 4. " He found him " in Bethel, and there he ſpake with us."

Rule 7. *Quiet your trembling hearts by recording and conſulting your paſt experiences of the care and faithfulneſs of God in former diſtreſſes.*

Theſe experiences are food for your faith in a wilderneſs condition, Pſal. lxxiv, 14. By this David kept his heart in time of danger, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. and Paul his, 2 Cor. i. 10. It was ſweetly anſwered by Silentiarius, when one told him that his enemies way-laid him to take away his life, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* If God take no care of me, how have I eſcaped hitherto? You may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones; for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now mark how Moſes pleads on that account with God, Numb. xiv. 19. " Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou haſt " forgiven them from Egypt until now." He doth not ſay as men do, Lord, this is the firſt fault, thou haſt not been troubled beforeto ſign their pardon: But, Lord, becauſe thou haſt pardoned them ſo often, I beſeech thee pardon them once again. So in new ſtraits, Lord, thou haſt often heard, helped, and ſaved in former fears; therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arm is not ſhortened.

Rule 8. *Be well ſatisfied that you are in the way of your duty, and that will beget holy courage in times of danger.*

" Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?" " 1 Pet. iii. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, " you may boldly com-
" mit yourſelves to God in well-doing," 1 Pet. iv. 19. It was this conſideration that raiſed Luther's ſpirit above all fear: ' In the cauſe ' of God (ſaid he) I ever am, and ever ſhall be ſtout;' herein I aſſume this title, *Cedo nulli*, a good cauſe will bear up a man's ſpirit bravely. Hear the ſaying of a * heathen, to the ſhame of cowardly Chriſtians: ' When the emperor Veſpaſian had commanded Fluidius ' Priſcus not to come to the ſenate; or if he did, to ſpeak nothing ' but what he would have him; the ſenator returned this noble anſ-
' wer, That as he was a ſenator, it was fit he ſhould be at the ſenate; ' and if being there he were required to give his advice, he would

* Char. of Wiſdom, p. 358.

'ſpeak freely that which his conſcience commanded him; the em-
'peror threatening that then he ſhould die, he anſwered, Did I ever
'tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will do
'what I ought; it is in your power to put me to death unjuſtly, and
'in me to die conſtantly.'

Righteouſneſs is a breaſt-plate, the cauſe of God will pay all your expences; let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of duty.

Rule 9. *Get your conſciences ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt from all guilt, and that will ſet your hearts above all fear.*

It is guilt upon the conſcience that ſoftens and cowardizes our ſpirits: "The righteous are bold as a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1. It was guilt in Cain's conſcience that made him cry, "Every one that meets "me ſhall ſlay me," Gen. iv. 14. A guilty conſcience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure conſcience is with real ones. A guilty ſinner carries a witneſs againſt himſelf in his own boſom. It was guilty Herod cried out, "John Baptiſt is riſen from the dead." Such a conſcience is the devil's anvil, on which he fabricates all thoſe ſwords and ſpears, with which the guilty ſinner pierces and wounds himſelf; guilt is to danger what fire is to gun-powder; a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of powder if he have no fire about him.

Rule 10. *Exerciſe holy truſt in times of great diſtreſs.*

Make it your buſineſs to truſt God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at reſt about them. So did David, Pſal. lvii. 3. "At what time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee;" q. d. Lord, if at any time a ſtorm riſe, I will make bold to ſhelter me from it under the covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and truſt, and never doubt but he will ſecure you. Iſa. lxii. 3. "Thou "wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, be-"cauſe he truſteth in thee." God takes it well when thou comeſt "to him thus; Father, my life, my liberty, or eſtate, are hunted af-"ter, and I cannot ſecure them; O let me leave them in thy hand: "The poor leaveth himſelf with thee;" and doth his God fail him? No, "thou art the helper of the fatherleſs," Pſal. x. 14. that is, thou art the helper of the deſtitute one, that hath none to go to but God. And that is a ſweet ſcripture, Pſal. cxii. 7. "He ſhall not be "afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord;" he doth not ſay, his ear ſhall be privileged from the report of evil tidings, he may hear as ſad tidings as other men, but his heart ſhall be privileged from the terror of thoſe tidings, "his heart is fixed."

Rule 11. *Conſult the honour of religion more, and your perſonal ſafety leſs.*

Is it for the honour of religion, think you, that Chriſtians ſhould be as timorous as hares, to ſtart at every ſound? Will not this tempt the world to think, that whatever you talk, yet your principles are no better than other mens? O what miſchief may the diſcoveries of

your fears before them do! It was a noble ſaying of Nehemiah, chap. vi. 11. "Should ſuch a man as I flee? And who, being as I am, "would flee?" Were it not better you ſhould die, than that the world ſhould be prejudiſed againſt Chriſt by your example? For, alas! how apt is the world, who judge more by what they ſee in your practices, than by what they underſtand of your principles, to conclude from your timorouſneſs, that how much ſoever you commend faith, and talk of aſſurance, yet you dare truſt to thoſe things no more than they when it comes to the trial. O let not your fears lay ſuch a ſtumbling-block before the blind world.

Rule 12. *He that will ſecure his heart from fear, muſt firſt ſecure the eternal intereſt of his ſoul in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt.*

When this is done, then you may ſay, *Now world, do thy worſt.* You will not be very ſolicitous about a vile body, when you are once aſſured it ſhall be well to all eternity with your precious ſouls. "Fear "not them (ſaith Chriſt) that can kill the body, and after that have "no more that they can do." The aſſured Chriſtian may ſmile with contempt upon all his enemies, and ſay, Is this the worſt that you do? What ſay you, Chriſtians? Are you aſſured that your ſouls are ſafe, that within a few moments of your diſſolution they ſhall be received by Chriſt into an everlaſting habitation? Well, if you be ſure of that, never trouble yourſelves about the inſtruments and means of your diſſolution.

Objection. *O, but a violent death is terrible to nature!*

*Anſwer.* But what matter is it, when thy ſoul is in heaven, whether it were let out at thy mouth, or at thy throat? Whether thy familiar friends, or barbarous enemies, ſtand about thy dead body, and cloſe thine eyes? Alas! it is not worth the making ſo much to do about; *Nihil corpus ſentit in nervo cum anima ſit in cœlo*, thy ſoul ſhall not be ſenſible in heaven how thy body is uſed on earth; no, it ſhall be ſwallowed up in life.

Rule 13. *Learn to quench all ſlaviſh creature-fears, in the reverential fear of God.*

This is a cure by diverſion: It is a rare piece of Chriſtian wiſdom to turn thoſe paſſions of the ſoul which moſt predominate into ſpiritual channels; to turn natural anger into ſpiritual zeal, natural mirth into holy cheerfulneſs, and natural fear into an holy dread and awe of God. This method of cure Chriſt preſcribes in that forementioned place, Matth. x. like to which is that in Iſa. viii. 12, 13. *fear not their fear;* but how ſhall we help it? Why, "ſanc-"tify the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear and your "dread." Natural fear may be allayed for the preſent by natural reaſon, or the removal of the occaſion, but then it is but like a candle blown out with a puff of breath, which is eaſily blown in again; but if the fear of God extinguiſh it, then it is like a candle quenched in water, which cannot eaſily be rekindled.

Rule 14. Laſtly, *Pour out thoſe fears to God in prayer, which the devil and your own unbelief pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the beſt out-let to fear; where is the Chriſtian that cannot ſet his *probatum eſt* to this direction? I will give you the greateſt example in the world to encourage you in the uſe of it, even the example of Jeſus Chriſt, Mark xiv. 32. When the hour of his danger and death drew nigh, he gets into the garden, ſeparates from the diſciples, and there wreſtles mightily with God in prayer, even unto an agony: in reference to which the apoſtle ſaith, Heb. v. 7. "Who in the days of his fleſh, when he had offered up prayers "and ſupplications, with ſtrong cries and tears, to him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard in that he feared." He was heard as to ſtrength and ſupport to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, O that theſe things might abide with you, and be reduced to practice in theſe evil days, that many trembling ſouls may be eſtabliſhed by them.

*Seaſon* 5. 'The fifth ſeaſon to excite this diligence in keeping the 'heart, is a time of ſtraits and outward pinching wants; although 'at ſuch times we ſhould complain to God, and not of God, (the 'throne of grace being erected for a time of need, Heb. iv. 16.) yet 'when the waters of relief run low, and want begins to pinch hard, 'how prone are the beſt hearts to diſtruſt the fountain! when the 'meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruiſe are almoſt ſpent, our 'faith and patience are almoſt ſpent too. Now it is difficult to keep 'down the proud and unbelieving heart in an holy quietude and 'ſweet ſubmiſſion at the foot of God: It is an eaſy thing to talk of 'truſting God for daily bread, while we have a full barn or purſe; 'but to ſay, as the prophet, Hab. iii. 17. "Though the fig tree '"ſhould not bloſſom, neither fruit be in the vine, &c. yet will I '"rejoice in the Lord:" ſurely this is not eaſy.' The fifth caſe therefore ſhall be this:

Caſe 5. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from diſtruſting God, or repining againſt him, when outward wants are either felt or feared.*

This caſe deſerves to be ſeriouſly pondered, and eſpecially to be ſtudied now, ſince it ſeems to be the deſign of providence to empty the people of God of their creature-fulneſs, and acquaint them with thoſe ſtraits which hitherto they have been altogether ſtrangers to.

Now, to ſecure the heart from the afore-mentioned dangers attending this condition, theſe following conſiderations, through the bleſſing of the Spirit, may prove effectual. And the firſt is this;

Conſideration 1. *That if God reduce you to ſtraits and neceſſities, yet he deals no otherwiſe therein with you, than he hath done with ſome of the choiceſt and holieſt men that ever lived.*

Your condition is not ſingular; though you have hitherto been ſtrangers to wants, other ſaints have daily converſed, and been fa-

miliarly acquainted with them. Hear what bleſſed Paul ſpeaks, not of himſelf only, but in the name of other ſaints reduced to like exigencies, 1 Cor. iv. 11. "Even to this preſent hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place." To ſee ſuch a man as Paul going up and down the world with a naked back, and empty belly, and not a houſe to put his head in, one that was ſo far above thee in grace and holineſs, one that did more ſervice for God in a day, than perhaps thou haſt done in all thy days, and yet you repine as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what neceſſities and ſtraits even a David hath ſuffered? How great were his ſtraits and neceſſities? 1 Sam. xxv. 8. "Give, I pray thee (ſaith he to Nabal) whatſoever cometh to thy hand, to thy ſervants, and to thy ſon David." Renowned Muſculus was forced to dig in the town ditch for a maintenance. Famous Ainſworth (as I have been credibly informed) was forced to ſell the bed he lay on to buy bread. But what ſpeak I of theſe? Behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, "who is the heir of all things, and by whom the worlds were made;" yet ſometimes would have been glad of any thing, having nothing to eat, Mark xi. 12, 13. "And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry; and ſeeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find [any thing] thereon."

Well then, hereby God hath ſet no mark of hatred upon you, neither can you infer the want of love from the want of bread. When thy repining heart puts the queſtion, Was there ever any ſorrow like unto mine? Aſk theſe worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou doſt, yet they were driven to as great ſtraits as thou art.

Conſid. 2. *If God leave you not in this neceſſitous condition without a promiſe, you have no reaſon to repine or deſpond under it.*

That is a ſad condition indeed to which no promiſe belongs. I remember Mr Calvin, upon theſe words, Iſa. ix. 1. "Nevertheleſs the dimneſs ſhall not be ſuch as was in her vexation," &c. ſolves the doubt, in what ſenſe the darkneſs of the captivity was not ſo great as the leſſer incurſions made by Tiglath Pilneſer. In the captivity the city was deſtroyed, and the temple burnt with fire, there was no compariſon in the affliction; but yet the darkneſs ſhould not be ſuch, and the reaſon (ſaith he) is this, *Huic certam promiſſionem eſſe additam, cum in priorbus nulla eſſet;* i. e. there was a certain promiſe made to this, but none to the other.

It is better to be as low as hell with a promiſe, than in paradiſe without one. Even the darkneſs of hell itſelf would be comparatively no darkneſs at all, were there but a promiſe to enlighten it. Now God hath left many ſweet promiſes for the faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition: ſuch are theſe: Pſal. xxxiv. 9, 10. "O fear the Lord, ye his ſaints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the lions do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that fear the

« Lord ſhall want nothing that is good." Pſal. xxxiii. 18, 19. « The « eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, to keep them alive in fa- « mine." Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. « No good thing will he with-hold from them « that walk uprightly." Rom. viii. 32. « He that ſpared not his « own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with « him alſo freely give us all things?" Iſa. xli. 17. « When the poor « and the needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue « faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael « will not forſake them." Here you ſee, firſt, their extreme wants, water being put even for the neceſſaries of life. (2.) Their certain relief, *I the Lord will hear them*; in which it is ſuppoſed that they cry unto him in their ſtraits, and he hears their cry.

Having therefore theſe promiſes, why ſhould not your diſtruſtful hearts conclude like David's, Pſal. xxiii. 1. « The Lord is my Shep- « herd, I ſhall not want."

Objection. *But theſe promiſes imply conditions: if they were abſolute, they would afford more ſatisfaction.*

*Solution.* What are thoſe tacit conditions you ſpeak of but theſe: (1.) That either he will ſupply or ſanctify your wants: (2.) That you ſhall have ſo much as God ſees fit for you. And doth this trouble you? Would you have the mercy whether ſanctified or no? Whether God ſees it fit for you, or no? Methinks the appetites of ſaints after earthly things ſhould not be ſo ravenous, to ſeize greedily upon any enjoyment, not caring how they have it.

But oh, when wants pinch, and we ſee not whence ſupplies ſhould come, then your faith in the promiſe ſhakes, and we, like murmuring Iſrael, cry, « He gave bread, can he give water alſo?" O unbelieving hearts! When did his promiſe fail? Whoever truſted them, and was aſhamed? May not God upbraid thee with thine unreaſonable infidelity; as Jer. ii. 31. « Have I been a wilderneſs unto you?" &c. Or as Chriſt ſaid to the diſciples, « Since I was with you, lack- « ed ye any thing?" Yea, may you not upbraid yourſelves, may you not ſay with good old Polycarp, Theſe many years I have ſerved Chriſt, and found him a good maſter. Indeed he may deny what your wantonneſs, but not what your real wants call for. He will not regard the cry of your luſts, nor yet deſpiſe the cry of your faith; though he will not indulge and humour your wanton appetites, yet he will not violate his own faithful promiſes. Theſe promiſes are your beſt ſecurity for eternal life; and it is ſtrange if they ſhould not ſatisfy you for daily bread: remember ye the words of the Lord, and ſolace your hearts with them amidſt all your wants. It is ſaid of Epicurus, that in the dreadful fits of the cholic, he often refreſhed himſelf, *Ob memoriam inventorum*,—by calling to mind his inventions in philoſophy: and of Poſſidonius the philoſopher, that in a great fit of the ſtone he ſolaced himſelf with diſcourſes of moral duty; and when the pain twinged him, he would ſay, *Nihil agis, dolor; quamvis ſis moleſtus, nunquam confitebor te eſſe malum*:—O pain, thou doſt

nothing: though thou art a little troubleſome, I will never confeſs thee to be evil. If upon ſuch grounds as theſe they could ſupport themſelves under ſuch grinding and racking pains, and even delude their diſeaſes by them, how much rather ſhould the precious promiſes of God, and the ſweet experiences which have gone along ſtep by ſtep with them, make you to forget all your wants, and comfort you in every ſtrait.

Conſid. 3. *If it be bad now, it might have been worſe; hath God denied thee the comforts of this life? He might have denied thee Chriſt, peace, and pardon alſo, and then thy caſe had been woful indeed.* You know God hath done ſo to millions in the world: how many ſuch wretched objects may your eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope, are miſerable here, and will be ſo to eternity; that have a bitter cup, and nothing to ſweeten it; no, not ſo much as an hope that it will be better. But it is not ſo with you, though you be poor in this world, "yet rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom "which God hath promiſed," Jam. ii. 5. O learn to ſet ſpiritual riches over againſt temporal poverty. Balance all your preſent troubles with your ſpiritual privileges. Indeed if God had denied your ſouls the robes of righteouſneſs to clothe them, the hidden manna to feed them, the heavenly manſions to receive them; if your ſouls were left deſtitute as well as your bodies, you might well be penſive; but this conſideration hath enough to bring the conſidering ſoul to reſt under any outward ſtrait. It was bravely ſaid by Luther, when want began to pinch him, 'Let us be contented with our hard fare (ſaid he), for do not we feaſt with angels upon Chriſt, the bread of life?" "And bleſſed be God (ſaith Paul) who hath abounded to us in all "ſpiritual bleſſings," Eph. i. 3.

Conſid. 4. *This affliction, though great, is not ſuch an affliction but God hath far greater, with which he chaſtiſes the dearly beloved of his ſoul in this world;* and ſhould he remove this, and inflict thoſe, you would account your preſent ſtate a very comfortable ſtate, and bleſs God to be as now you are.

What think ye, ſirs? Should God remove your preſent troubles, ſupply all your outward wants, give you the deſire of your hearts in creature-comforts, but hide his face from you, ſhoot his arrows into your ſouls, and cauſe the venom of them to drink up your ſpirits? Should he leave you but a few days to the buffetting of Satan, and his blaſphemous injections; ſhould he hold your eyes but a few nights waking with horrors of conſcience, toſſing to and fro till the dawning of the day: ſhould he lead you through the chambers of death, ſhew you the viſions of darkneſs, and make his terrors ſet themſelves in array againſt you: Then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former neceſſitous condition, with peace of conſcience; and count bread and water, with God's favour, a happy ſtate? O then, take heed of repining. Say not God deals hardly with you, leſt you provoke him to convince you, by your own

ſenſe and feeling, that he hath worſe rods than theſe for unſubmiſſive and froward children.

Conſid 5. *If it be bad now, it will be better ſhortly.*

O keep thy heart by that conſideration: the meal in the barrel is almoſt ſpent; well, be it ſo, why ſhould that trouble me, if I am almoſt beyond the need and uſe of all theſe things. The traveller hath ſpent almoſt all his money, but a ſhilling or two left: well, ſaith he, though my money be almoſt ſpent, yet my journey is almoſt finiſhed too; I am near home, and then I ſhall be fully ſupplied. If there be no candles in the houſe, yet it is a comfort to think that it is almoſt day, and then there will be no need of candles. I am afraid, Chriſtian, thou miſreckoneſt thyſelf when thou thinkeſt thy proviſion is almoſt ſpent, and you have a great way to travel: many years to live, and nothing to live upon; it may be not half ſo many as thou ſuppoſeſt; in this be confident, if thy proviſion be ſpent, either freſh ſupplies are coming, though thou ſeeſt not from whence, or thou art nearer thy journey's end than thou reckoneſt thyſelf to be. Deſponding ſoul, doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the road to the heavenly city, and almoſt arrived there, within a few days journey of his Father's houſe, where all his wants ſhall be ſupplied, to take on thus about a little meat, drink, or clothes, which he fears he ſhall want by the way? It was a noble ſaying of the forty Martyrs, famous in the *Eccleſiaſtical ſtory*, when turned out naked in a froſty night to be ſtarved to death, with theſe words they comforted one another, δριμυς ο χειμων, *&c.* The winter indeed is ſharp and cold, but heaven is warm and comfortable; here we ſhiver for cold, but Abraham's boſom will make amends for all.

Objection 1. *But I may die for want.*

*Solution* (1.) Whoever did ſo? When were the righteous forſaken? (2.) If ſo, your journey is ended, and you are fully ſupplied.

Object. 2. *But I am not ſure of that; were I ſure of heaven, it were another matter.*

*Sol.* Are you not ſure of that? Then you have other matters to trouble yourſelves about than theſe: methinks theſe ſhould be the leaſt of all your cares: I do not find that ſouls perplexed and troubled about the want of Chriſt, pardon of ſin, &c. are uſually very anxious, or ſolicitous about theſe things. He that ſeriouſly puts ſuch queſtions as theſe, What ſhall I do to be ſaved? How ſhall I know my ſin is pardoned? doth not uſually trouble himſelf with, "What "ſhall I eat, what ſhall I drink, or wherewith ſhall I be clothed?"

Conſid. 6. *Doth it become the children of ſuch a Father to diſtruſt his all-ſufficiency, or repine at any of his diſpenſations?*

Do you well to queſtion his care and love upon every new exigence? Say, have you not been aſhamed of this formerly? Hath not your Father's ſeaſonable proviſions for you in former ſtraits, put you to the bluſh, and made you reſolve never to queſtion his love and care any more? and yet will you renew your unworthy ſuſpicions of him

again? Diſingenuous child! reaſon thus with thyſelf; if I periſh for want of what is good and needful for me, it muſt either be becauſe my Father knows not my wants, or hath not wherewith to ſupply them: or elſe regards not what becomes of me. Which of theſe ſhall I charge upon him? Not the firſt; for, Mark vi. 32. "My "Father knows what I have need of;" my condition is not hid from him: nor the ſecond, "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs "of it, Pſal. xxiv. 1. His name is *God all-ſufficient*, Gen. xvii. 1. Not the laſt, for, "as a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pities "them that fear him," Pſal. ciii. 13. "The Lord is exceedingly pi- "tiful, and of tender mercy," Jam. v. 11. "He hears the young "ravens when they cry," Job xxxviii. 41. and will he not hear me? "Conſider (ſaith Chriſt) the fowls of the air," Matth. vi. 26. Not the fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand, but the fowls of the air, that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and clothe his enemies, and will he forget his children? He heard the very cry of Iſhmael in diſtreſs, Gen. xvi. 17. O my unbelieving heart! doſt thou yet doubt? Remember Hagar and the child.

Conſid. 7. *Your poverty is not your ſin, but your affliction only! if by ſinful means you have not brought it upon yourſelves; and if it be but an affliction, it may be borne the eaſier for that.*

It is hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and puniſhment of ſin; when men are under trouble upon that account, they uſe to ſay, O! if it were but a ſingle affliction coming from the hand of God by way of trial, I could bear it, but I have brought it upon myſelf by ſin, it comes as the puniſhment of ſin: the marks of God's diſpleaſure are upon it; it is the guilt within that troubles and galls more than the want without.

But it is not ſo here, and therefore you have no reaſon to be caſt down under it.

Objection. *But though there be no ſting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other ſtings: As firſt, the diſcredit of religion; I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby religion is like to ſuffer.*

*Solution.* It is well you have an heart to diſcharge every duty, yet if God diſable you by providence, it is no diſcredit to your profeſſion, becauſe you do not that which you cannot do, ſo long as it is your deſire and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do; and in this caſe God's will is, that lenity and forbearance be exerciſed towards you, Deut. xxiv. 12, 13.

Object. 2. *But it grieves me to behold the neceſſities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refreſh, but now cannot.*

*Sol.* If you cannot, it ceaſes to be your duty, and God accepts the drawing out of your ſoul to the hungry in compaſſion and deſire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purſe to relieve and ſupply them.

Object. 3. *But I find ſuch a condition full of temptations, a ſore clog in the way to heaven.*

*Sol.* Every condition in the world hath its clogs and attending temptations; and were you in a proſperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than you now have: For though I confeſs poverty hath its temptations as well as proſperity, yet I am confident proſperity hath not theſe excellent advantages that poverty hath: For here you have an opportunity to diſcover the ſincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, and find enough in him, and conſtantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have ſhewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condition in the world, when want pinches, and the heart begins to ſink, then improve and bleſs God for theſe helps to keep it.

*Seaſon* 6. 'The ſixth ſeaſon of expreſſing this diligence in keeping 'the heart, is the ſeaſon of duty; when we draw nigh to God in 'public, private, or ſecret duties, then it is time to look to the heart; 'for the vanity of the heart ſeldom diſcovers itſelf more than at ſuch 'times. How oft doth the poor ſoul cry out, O Lord! how fain 'would I ſerve thee, but vain thoughts will not let me; I came to 'open my heart to thee, to delight my ſoul in communion with thee, 'but my corruptions have ſet upon me: Lord, call off theſe vain 'thoughts, and ſuffer them not to proſtitute the ſoul which is eſ-'poufed to thee before thy face.' The ſixth caſe then is this,

Caſe 6. *How the heart may be kept from diſtractions by vain thoughts, in the time of duty.*

There is a twofold diſtraction or wandering of the heart in duty: (1.) Voluntary and habitual, Pſalm lxxviii. 8. "They ſet not their "hearts aright, and their ſpirit was not ſteadfaſt with God." This is the caſe of formaliſts, and proceeds from the want of an holy bent and inclination of the heart to God; their hearts are under the power of their luſt, and therefore it is no wonder they go after their luſt, even when they are about holy things, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. (2.) Involuntary and lamented diſtractions, Rom. vii. 21—24. "I find "then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me; "O wretched man that I am," &c. This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakneſs and imperfection of grace. And in this caſe the ſoul may make the like complaint againſt its own corruptions that Abijah did againſt Jeroboam, 2 Chron. xiii. 6, 7. "Yet Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat is riſen up againſt his "lord, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could "not withſtand him, and there are gathered unto him vain men, "the children of Belial." Grace hath dominion, but luſts are mutinous and ſeditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my buſineſs to ſhew you how theſe diſtractions come into the heart, but rather how to get and keep them out of the heart: in order whereunto take theſe ten following helps.

*Help* 1. Sequeſter yourſelves from all earthly employments, and

ſet apart ſome time for ſolemn preparation to meet God in duty: You come reeking hot out of the world into God's preſence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties: It is with the heart a few minutes ſince plunged in the world, now at the feet of God, juſt as with the ſea after a ſtorm, which ſtill continues working, muddy, and diſquiet, though the wind be laid, and the ſtorm over: Thy heart muſt have ſometime to ſettle. There are few muſicians that can take down a lute or viol, and play preſently upon it, without ſome time to tune it; there are few Chriſtians can preſently ſay, as Pſalm lvii. 7. "O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed." O when thou goeſt to God in any Duty, take thy heart aſide, and ſay, O my ſoul, I am now addreſſing myſelf to the greateſt work that ever a creature was employed about: I am going into the awful preſence of God about buſineſs of everlaſting moment.

Oh my ſoul, leave trifling now, be compoſed, watchful, ſerious, this is no common-work; it is God-work, ſoul-work, eternity-work. I am now going forth bearing ſeed, which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come; pauſe a while upon thy ſins, wants, troubles; keep thy thoughts a while on theſe before thou addreſs thyſelf to duty. David firſt muſed, and then ſpake with his tongue, Pſal. xxxix. 3, 4. So Pſal. xlv. 1. "My heart is inditing," &c.

*Help* 2. Having compoſed thy heart by previous meditation, preſently ſet a guard upon thy ſenſes: How often are poor Chriſtians in danger of loſing the eyes of their mind by thoſe of their body; for this Job covenanted with his ſenſes, Chap. xxxi. 1. for this David prayed, Pſal. cxix. 37. "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, "and quicken thou me in thy way." This may ſerve to expound that myſtical Arabian proverb, which adviſes to 'ſhut the windows 'that the houſe may be light:' It were excellent if you could ſay in your outſets upon duty, as an holy man once did, when he come off from duty: *Claudimini, oculi mei, claudimini, &c.* 'Be ſhut, O mine 'eyes, be ſhut: for it is impoſſible you ſhould ever ſee ſuch beauty 'and glory in any creature, as I have now ſeen in God.' You had need avoid all occaſions of diſtraction from without, for be ſure you will meet enough from within. Intention of ſpirit in the work of God, locks up the eye and ear againſt vanity. When Marcellus entered the gates of Syracuſe, Archimedes was ſo intent about his mathematical ſcheme, that he took no notice of the ſoldiers when they entered his very ſtudy with drawn ſwords; a *fervent* cannot be a *vagrant* heart.

Help 3. *Beg of God a mortified fancy.* A working fancy, ſaith one, how much ſoever it be extolled among men, is a great ſnare to the ſoul: except it work in fellowſhip with right reaſon, and a ſanctified heart: The phantaſy is a power of the ſoul placed between the ſenſes and the underſtanding, it is that which firſt ſtirs itſelf in the ſoul, and by its motions the other powers are ſtirred; it is the common

ſhop where thoughts are firſt forged and framed, and as this is, ſo are they; if imaginations be not firſt caſt down, it is impoſſible that every thought of the heart ſhould be brought into obedience to Chriſt, 2 Cor. x. 5. The fancy is naturally the wildeſt and moſt untameable power in the ſoul. Some Chriſtians, eſpecially ſuch as are of hot and dry conſtitutions, have much to do with it.

And truly, the more ſpiritual the heart is, the more it is troubled about the vanity and wildneſs of it. O what a ſad thing it is! that thy nobler ſoul muſt lackey up and down after a vain and roving fancy, that ſuch a beggar ſhould ride on horſe-back, and ſuch a prince run after on foot; that it ſhould call off the ſoul from attendance upon God, when it is moſt ſweetly engaged in communion with him, to proſecute ſuch vanities as it will ſtart at ſuch times before it! beg earneſtly of God that the power of ſanctification may once come upon it. Some Chriſtians have attained ſuch a degree of ſanctification of their fancies, that they have had much ſweetneſs left upon their hearts by the ſpiritual workings of it in the night-ſeaſon: When thy fancy is more mortified, thy thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

Help 4. *If thou wouldſt keep thy heart from thoſe vain excurſions, realize to thyſelf by faith, the holy and awful preſence of God in duties.*

If the preſence of a grave man will compoſe us to ſerioufneſs, how much more the preſence of an holy God? Thinkeſt thou thy ſoul durſt be ſo gay and light, if the ſenſe of a divine eye were upon it? Remember the place where thou art is the place of his feet, Iſa. lx. 13. act faith upon the omniſciency of God. "All the churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the "heart, trieth the reins, and I will give to every one of you "according to your works," Rev. ii. 23. "All things are na-"ked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 12. Realize his infinite holineſs; into what a ſerious, compoſed frame did the ſight of God, in his holineſs, put the ſpirit of the prophet? Iſa. vi. 5. Labour alſo to get upon thy heart due apprehenſions of the greatneſs of God, ſuch as Abraham had, Gen. xviii. 27. "I that am but duſt and aſhes have taken upon me to "ſpeak to God." And laſtly, remember the jealouſy of God, how tender he is over his worſhip, Lev. x. 3. "And Moſes ſaid to "Aaron, This is that the Lord ſpake, ſaying I will be ſanctified in "them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glo-"rified."

'A man that is praying (ſaith Bernard) ſhould behave himſelf as 'if he were entering into the court of heaven, where he ſees the 'Lord upon his throne, ſurrounded with ten thouſand of his angels 'and ſaints miniſtering unto him.' When thou comeſt from a duty in which thy heart hath been toying and wandering, thou mayeſt ſay, Verily God was in this place, and I knew it not. Suppoſe all the impertinencies and vanities which have paſt through thine heart in

duty were written out, and interlined with thy petitions, couldeſt thou have the face to preſent it to God? Should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer, would not men abhor thee? Why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, Pſal. cxxxix. 2. If thou wert petitioning the king for thy life, would it not provoke him to ſee thee playing with thy bandſtrings, or catching at every fly that lights upon thy clothes, whilſt thou art ſpeaking to him about ſuch ſerious matters? O think ſadly upon that ſcripture, Pſal. lxxxvii. 7. "God is greatly to be feared in the aſſemblies of his "ſaints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round a-"bout him?" Why did God aſcend in thunderings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon Sinai? Exod. xix. 16—18. Why did the mountains ſmoke under him? The people quake and tremble round about him, yea, Moſes himſelf not exempted? but to teach the people that great truth, Heb. xii. 28, 29. "Let us have grace "whereby we may ſerve him acceptably, with reverence and godly "fear, for our God is a conſuming fire!" Preſent God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more ſerious frame.

Help 5. *Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty.* What is the reaſon our hearts are ſo dull, careleſs, and wandering, when we come to hear or pray, but becauſe there have been ſuch long intermiſſions in our communion with God; by reaſon whereof the heart is out of a praying frame? If that ſpiritual warmth, thoſe holy impreſſions we carry from God in one duty, were but preſerved to kindle another duty, it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent and ſerious with God.

To this purpoſe thoſe intermediate ejaculations betwixt ſtated and ſolemn duties, are of moſt ſweet and excellent uſe; by theſe one duty is as it were linked to another, and ſo the ſoul, as it were, wraps up itſelf in a chain of duties. That Chriſtian ſeldom miſſes his mark in ſolemn duty, that ſhoots up many of theſe darts in the intervals of duty. It is an excellent commendation Chriſt beſtows upon the ſpouſe, Cant. iv. 11. "Thy lips, O my ſpouſe, drop as the honey-"comb." Upon which text one gives this ſweet note; The honey-comb drops actually but ſometimes, but it always hangs full of ſweet drops ready to fall: If our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

Help 6. *Endeavour to engage and raiſe thy affections to God in duty, if thou wouldſt have thy diſtractions cured.*

A dropping eye, and a melting heart, are ſeldom troubled as others are upon this account: When the ſoul is intent upon any work, it gathers in its ſtrength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when it is deeply affected, it will be intent: the affections command the thoughts to go after them; deadneſs cauſes diſtraction, and diſtraction increaſes deadneſs: Could you but look upon duties as the galleries of communion in which you walk with God, where your ſouls

may be filled with thoſe raviſhing and matchleſs delights that are in his preſence, your ſoul would not offer to ſtir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty as it is with thoſe that dig for golden ore; they try here, and finding none, try there; and ſo go from place to place, till at laſt they hit upon the rich vein, and there they ſit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and conſtancy. "O how I "love thy law, it is my meditation day and night!" Pſal. cxix. 97. The ſoul could dwell day and night upon its knees, when once its delights, loves, and deſires are engaged. What is the reaſon your hearts are ſo ſhuffling, eſpecially in ſecret duties? Why are you ready to be gone, almoſt as ſoon as you are come into the preſence of God, but becauſe your affections are not engaged?

Help 7. *Mourn over the matter to God, and call in aſſiſtance from heaven, when vain thoughts aſſault thy heart in duty.*

When the meſſenger of Satan buffetted Paul by wicked injections, as is ſuppoſed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. never ſlight wandering thoughts in duty as ſmall matters: follow every vain thought with a deep ſigh, turning thee to God with ſuch words as theſe: Lord, I came hither to ſpeak with thee, and here a buſy devil and a vain heart conſpiring together have ſet upon me. O my God! what an heart have I? Shall I never wait upon thee without diſtraction! when ſhall I enjoy an hour of free communion with thee? Help me, my God, this once; do but diſplay thy glory before mine eye, and my heart ſhall quickly be recovered: Thou knoweſt I came hither to enjoy thee, and ſhall I go away without thee? See how the heart of thy poor child works towards thee! ſtrives to get near thee, but cannot: My heart is aground, "come "thou north-wind, blow ſouth-wind," O for a freſh gale now from thy Spirit, to ſet my affections a-float! Couldſt thou but thus affectionately bewail thy diſtractions to God, thou mighteſt obtain help and deliverance from them: He would ſay to Satan and thine imperious luſts, as Ahaſuerus ſaid of Haman, What, will he force the queen before my face? Who are theſe that ſet upon my child in my work and preſence?

Help 8. *Look upon the ſucceſs and ſweetneſs of thy duties, as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart cloſe with God in them.*

Theſe two things, the ſucceſs and ſweetneſs of duty, are as dear to a Chriſtian as his two eyes; and both of theſe muſt neceſſarily be loſt, if the heart be loſt in duty. Job xxxv. 13. "Surely God hear- "eth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it." The promiſe is made to an heart engaged, Jer. xxix. 13. "Then ſhall ye ſeek "me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your hearts." Well then, when thou findeſt thy heart under the power of deadneſs and diſtraction, ſay to thy ſoul, O what do I loſe by a careleſs heart now! my praying times are the choiceſt parts, the golden ſpots

of all my time: Could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain ſuch mercies as would be matter for a ſong to all eternity

Help. 9. *Look upon it as a great diſcovery of the ſincerity or hypocriſy of your hearts, according as you find them careful or careleſs in this matter.*

Nothing will ſtartle an upright heart more than this: What, ſhall I give way to a cuſtomary wandering of heart from God? Shall the ſpot of the hypocrite appear upon my ſoul? They indeed can drudge on in the round of duty, never regarding the frames of their hearts, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. but ſhall I do ſo? When men come into the preſence-chamber, and the king is not there, they bow to the empty chair. O never let me be ſatisfied with empty duties! never let me take my leave of a duty "until mine eyes have ſeen the King, the "Lord of hoſts."

Help 10. Laſtly, *It will be of ſpecial uſe to keep thine heart with God in duties, to conſider what influence all thy duties have into thy eternity.*

Theſe are your ſeed-times, and what you ſow in your duties in this world, you muſt look to reap the fruits of it in another world, Gal. vi. 7, 8. If you ſow to the fleſh, of that you ſhall reap corruption; but if to the Spirit, life everlaſting. O my ſoul, anſwer ſeriouſly, wouldſt thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity in the world to come? Dareſt thou ſay, when thy thoughts are roving to the ends of the earth in duty, when thou ſcarce mindeſt what thou ſayeſt or heareſt; now, Lord, I am ſowing to the Spirit; now I am providing and laying up for eternity; now I am ſeeking for glory, honour, and immortality; now I am ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate; now I am taking the kingdom of heaven by an holy violence? O ſuch a conſideration as this ſhould make the multitudes of vain thoughts that preſs in upon the heart in duty, to fly ſeven ways before it. And thus I have ſhewn you how to keep your hearts in the times of duty.

*Seaſon* 7. 'The ſeventh ſeaſon calling for more than common diligence to keep the heart, is, when we receive injuries and abuſes from men. Such is the depravedneſs and corruption of man in his collapſed ſtate, that *homo homini lupus*, one man is become a *wolf*, a *tyger*, to another: They are, as the prophet complains, Hab. i. 14. "As the fiſhes of the ſea, and as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them;" and as wicked men are cruel and oppreſſive one to another, ſo they conſpire together to abuſe and wrong the people of God, as the ſame prophet complains, ver. 13. "The wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he." Now when we are thus abuſed and wronged, it is hard to keep the heart from revengeful motions: to make it meekly and quietly to commit the cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly; to exerciſe no other affection but pity towards them that abuſe us. Surely the ſpirit that is in us luſteth to revenge, but it muſt not be ſo; you have choice helps in the goſpel to keep down your hearts from ſuch ſinful mo-

' tions againſt your enemies, and to ſweeten your embittered ſpirits.' The ſeventh caſe then ſhall be this.

Caſe 7. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from revengeful motions, under the greateſt injuries and abuſes from men.*

The goſpel, indeed, allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and aſſert our rights, but not to vent our corruptions, and invade God's right. When therefore thou findeſt thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengeful motions, preſently apply the following remedies; and the firſt is this,

Remedy 1. *Urge upon thy heart the ſevere prohibitions of revenge by the law of God.* Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleaſant and luſcious ſoever it be to our vitiated appetites. O, ſaith nature, revenge is ſweet: O but, ſaith God, the effects thereof ſhall be bitter. How plainly hath God interdicted this fleſh-pleaſing ſin, Prov. xx. 22. "Say not I will recompenſe evil." Prov. xxiv. 29. "Say not I will "do ſo to him as he hath done to me." Rom. xii. 17. "Recom- "penſe to no man evil for evil." And ver. 19. "Avenge not your- "ſelves, but rather give place to wrath." Nay, that is not all; but "Prov. xxv. 21. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, "give him drink." The word *feed him*, as critics obſerve, ſignifies to feed cheerfully, and tenderly, as birds do their young ones: The ſcripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquillity of human ſociety, which can never be preſerved if revenge be not depoſed. It was wont to be an argument urged by the Chriſtians to prove their religion to be ſupernatural and pure that forbids revenge, which is ſo ſweet to nature; and verily it is a thouſand pities ſuch an argument ſhould be loſt. Well, then, awe your hearts with the authority of God in theſe ſcriptures, and when carnal reaſon ſaith, mine enemy deſerves to be hated, let conſcience reply, but doth God deſerve to be diſobeyed? Thus and thus hath he done, and ſo he hath wronged me; but what hath God done that I ſhould wrong him; If he dare be ſo bold to break the peace, ſhall I be ſo wicked to break the precept? If he fears not to wrong me, ſhall not I fear to wrong God? O let the fear of God's threatenings repreſs ſuch ſinful motions.

Remedy 2. *Set before your eyes the moſt eminent patterns of meekneſs and forgiveneſs, that your ſouls may fall in love with them.*

This is the way to cut off thoſe common pleas of the fleſh for revenge: As thus no man would bear ſuch an affront: Yes, ſuch and ſuch have borne as bad and worſe. I ſhall be reckoned a coward, a fool, if I paſs by this: No matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wiſeſt and holieſt of men; never did any ſuffer more and greater abuſes from men than Chriſt did, and never did any carry it more peaceably and forgivingly, Iſa. liii. 7. "He was oppreſſed, and he "was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter." &c. This pattern of our Lord the apoſtle ſets before you for your imitation, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22, 23. "For even "hereunto are you called, becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leav-

" ing us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps: Who when he " was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened " not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly." To be of a meek, forgiving ſpirit, is Chriſt-like, God-like; " then ſhall " you be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he " maketh his ſun to riſe upon the evil and upon the good, and ſend- " eth rain on the juſt and unjuſt," Matth. v. 45. How eminently alſo did the Spirit of Chriſt reſt upon his apoſtles? Never were there ſuch men upon earth for true excellency of ſpirit. None were ever abuſed more, or ſuffered their abuſes better. " Being reviled (ſay " they) we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; being defamed, " we entreat," 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. Mr Calvin, though a man of a quick ſpirit, yet had attained ſuch a degree of this Chriſt-like forgiveneſs, that when Luther had uſed ſome opprobrious language of him, the good man ſaid no more but this, 'Although he ſhould call me 'devil, yet I will acknowledge him to be an eminent ſervant of Je- 'ſus Chriſt.'

I have often heard it reported of holy Mr Dod, that when one, enraged at his cloſe, convincing doctrine, picked a quarrel with him, ſmote him on the face, and daſhed out two of his teeth; this meek ſervant of Chriſt ſpit out the teeth and blood into his hand, and ſaid, See, here, you have knocked out two of my teeth, and that without any juſt provocation; but on condition I might do your ſoul good, I would give you leave to daſh out all the reſt. Here is the excellency of a Chriſtian's ſpirit, above all the attainments of moral heathens: Though they were excellent in many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving ſpirit. It is the firſt office of juſtice, ſaid Tully, to hurt no body, unleſs firſt provoked by an injury; whereupon Lactantius, *O quam ſimplicem veramque ſententiam, duorum verborum adjectione, corrupit!* What a dainty ſentence ſpoiled the orator, by adding thoſe two laſt words! Strive then for this excellency of ſpirit, which is the proper excellency of Chriſtians; do ſome ſingular thing that others cannot do, and then you will have a teſtimony in their conſciences. When Moſes out-did the *magicians*, they were forced to confeſs the finger of God in that buſineſs.

Remedy 3. *Conſider well the quality of the perſon that hath wronged thee;* either he is a good man, or a wicked man, that hath done thee the injury: If he be a good man, there is light and tenderneſs in his conſcience, and that will bring him at laſt to a ſenſe of the evil he hath done; however, Chriſt hath forgiven him greater injuries than theſe, and why ſhouldſt not thou? Will Chriſt not upbraid him with any of thoſe wrong sdone to him, but frankly forgive them all; and wilt thou take him by the throat for ſome petty abuſe that he hath done to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? If ſo, truly you have more need to exerciſe pity, than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: For, (1.) He is beſide himſelf, ſo indeed is every unconverted ſinner,

Luke xv. 17. Should you go into Bedlam, and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third threaten you; would you ſay, I will be revenged upon them? No, you would rather go away pitying them. Alas, poor creatures! they are out of their wits, and know not what they do. Beſides,

(2.) There is a day coming, if they repent not, when they will have more miſery than you can find in your hearts to wiſh them; you need not ſtudy to revenge, God's vengeance ſleepeth not, and will ſhortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? Have they not an eternity of miſery coming? If they repent not, this muſt be the portion of their cup; and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to make you reparation.

Remedy 4. *Keep down thy heart by this conſideration, that by revenge thou canſt but ſatisfy a luſt, but by forgiveneſs thou ſhalt conquer a luſt.*

Suppoſe by revenge thou ſhouldſt deſtroy one enemy, I will ſhew thee how, by forgiving, thou ſhalt conquer three, thine own luſt, the devil's temptation, and thine enemy's heart; and is not this a more glorious conqueſt? If by revenge thou overcome thine enemy, yet (as Bernard ſaith) *Infelix victoria, ubi ſuperans virum ſecumbit vitio:* Unhappy victory, when, by overcoming another man, thou art overcome by thine own corruption. But this way you may obtain a glorious conqueſt indeed. What an honourable and dry victory, did David this way obtain over Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. "And it "came to paſs, when David had made an end of ſpeaking theſe "words, that Saul lifted up his voice, and wept; and he ſaid to "David, thou art more righteous than I."

It muſt be a very diſingenuous nature indeed, upon which meekneſs and forgiveneſs will not work; a ſtony heart, which this fire will not melt. To this ſenſe is that, Prov. xxv. 21. "If "thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink; "for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head." Some will have it a ſin-puniſhing fire, but others a heart-melting fire. To be ſure it will either melt his heart, or aggravate his miſery. Auguſtine thinks that Stephen's prayer for his enemies was the great means of Paul's converſion.

Remedy 5. *Seriouſly propound this queſtion to thy own heart, have I got any good by the wrongs and injuries received, or have I not?* If they have done you no good, turn the revenge upon yourſelves: O that I ſhould have ſuch a bad heart, that can get no good out of ſuch troubles! O that my ſpirit ſhould be ſo unlike to Chriſt's! The patience and meekneſs of other Chriſtians, have turned all the injuries thrown at them into precious ſtones; the ſpirits of others have been raiſed in bleſſing God, when they have been loaded with reproaches from the world, they have bound them as an ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (ſaid Luther) *quod video nomen peſſimum mihi creſcere.* I could even be proud upon it, that I have a

bad name among wicked men. To the ſame purpoſe Jerom ſaid ſweetly, *Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus ſum quem mundus oderit*; I thank my God that I am worthy to be hated of the world. Thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnify God, and bleſs him for them; if it work contrary with me, I have cauſe enough to be filled with ſelf-diſpleaſancy.

If you have got any good by them; if the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you ſearch your hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly; if their wronging you, has made you ſee how you have wronged God, then let me ſay for them, as Paul did himſelf, Pray forgive them this wrong.

What! can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been inſtrumental of ſo much good to you? That is ſtrange! what though they meant it for evil? yet if God hath turned it to good, you have no more reaſon to rage againſt the inſtrument than he had who received a wound from his enemy which only brake, and let out that impoſthume which otherwiſe had been his death.

Remedy 6. *It is of excellent uſe to keep the heart from revenge, to look up, and eye the firſt cauſe by which all our troubles are ordered.*

This will calm and meeken our ſpirits quickly: never did a wicked tongue try the patience of a ſaint, more than David's was tried by that railing Shimei; yet the ſpirit of this good man was not at all poiſoned with revenge, though he goes along curſing, and caſting ſtones at him, all the way. Yea, though Abiſhai offered David, if he pleaſed, the head of that enemy; yet the king ſaid, "What "have I to do with you, ye ſons of Zureiah? So let him curſe, be- "cauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe David: who then ſhall "ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſo?" It may be, God uſes him as his rod, to laſh me, becauſe I, by my ſin, made his enemies to blaſpheme him; and ſhall I be angry with the rod? How irrational were that? This alſo was it that quieted Job; he doth not rail, and vow revenge upon the Chaldeans and Sabeans, but eyes God as the orderer of thoſe troubles, and is quiet; "The Lord hath taken a- "way, bleſſed be his name, Job i. 21.

*Objection.* But you will ſay, *To turn aſide the right of a man, to ſubvert a man in his cauſe, the Lord approveth not*, Lam. iii. 36.

*Anſwer.* True: but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting will, and there is a great argument for quiet ſubmiſſion in that; nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all thoſe troubles. Did we ſee more of an holy God, we ſhould ſhew leſs of a corrupt nature in ſuch trials.

Remedy 7. *Conſider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be ſo eaſily inflamed with revenge againſt others that have wronged you.*

You are daily grieving, and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you; and will you be ſo quick in avenging yourſelves upon others? O what a ſharp and terrible rebuke is that! Mat. xviii. 32, 33. "O thou wicked and

« ſlothful ſervant; I forgave thee all that debt becauſe thou deſireſt « me, ſhouldſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow « ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?" None ſhould be ſo filled with bowels of pity, forbearance, and mercy, to ſuch as wrong them, as thoſe ſhould be that have experienced the riches of mercy themſelves: methinks the mercy of God to us ſhould melt our very bowels into mercy over others; it is impoſſible we can be cruel to others, except we forget how kind Chriſt hath been to us. Thoſe that have found mercy, ſhould ſhew mercy: if kindneſs cannot work, methinks fear ſhould. « If you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will « your Father forgive you your treſpaſſes," Matth. vi. 15.

Remedy 8. Laſtly, *Let the conſideration of the day of the Lord, which draweth nigh, with-hold your hearts from anticipating it by acts of revenge.*

Why are you ſo quick? Is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abuſed ſervants? « Be patient therefore, my brethren, unto the « coming of the Lord. Behold the huſbandman waiteth, &c. Be « ye alſo patient, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh: Grudge « not one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye be condemned. Be« hold the Judge ſtandeth at the door," Jam. v. 7, 8, 9. This text affords three arguments againſt revenge: (1.) the Lord's near approach. (2.) The example of the huſbandman's patience. (3.) The danger we draw upon ourſelves by anticipating God's judgment; *Vengeance is mine*, ſaith Lord; he will diſtribute juſtice more equally, and impartially, than you can: they who believe they have a God to right them, will not ſo much wrong themſelves, as avenge their own wrongs.

Objection 1. *But fleſh and blood are not able to bear ſuch abuſes.*

*Solution.* If you reſolve to conſult fleſh and blood in ſuch caſes, and do no more but what that will enable you to do; never pretend to religion: Chriſtians muſt do ſingular and ſupernatural things.

Object. 2. *But if I put up ſuch abuſes, I ſhall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.*

*Sol.* (1.) You may be reckoned ſo among fools, but God and good men will account it your wiſdom, and the excellency of your ſpirits. (2.) It muſt be a baſe ſpirit indeed that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Chriſtian: and thus learn to keep your hearts from revenge under all provocations.

*Seaſon* 8. 'The next ſeaſon in which we are in danger of loſing our 'hearts is, when we meet with great croſſes and provocations; then 'ſinful paſſion is apt to tranſport the heart. It is the fault of many 'good men to be of haſty and quick ſpirits, when provoked, though 'they dare not concoct anger into malice; for that would be a note 'of wickedneſs: yet are they very incident to ſudden anger, which 'is a ſign of weakneſs.' * Beza, in the life of Calvin, obſerves,

* Bez. in Vit. Cal. p. 100.

'that he was of a keen and haſty ſpirit;' and he that writes the life of the great Cameron, * ſaith, 'that his anger was ſoon ſtirred towards his near and familiar friends, but then he would eaſily depoſe it and acknowledge his weakneſs.' Alas! when provocations and trials of our patience come, we know not what ſpirit we are of. The eighth caſe therefore is this,

Caſe 8. *How the heart may be kept meek and patient under great croſſes and provocations.*

There are three ſorts of anger, *natural*, *holy*, and *ſinful* anger. (1.) *Natural*, which is nothing elſe but the motion of the iraſcible appetite towards an offenſive object; and this in itſelf is no ſin, they are propaſſions, rather than paſſions; the infelicities, rather than the ſins of nature, as Jerom calls them. Reaſon, ſaith Plutarch, is the *driver*, the ſoul is the *chariot*, and the two horſes that draw it on in all its motions, are the concupiſcible and iraſcible appetites; whilſt theſe are rightly managed by reaſon, they are not only lawful, but very uſeful to the ſoul. God would not have us to be ſtupid and inſenſate, though he would have us to be meek and patient. In Eph. i. 26. he allows the natural motion, but forbids the ſinful exorbitancy. (2.) Holy anger, which is a pure flame, kindled by an heavenly ſpark of love to God, and in ſcripture is called *zeal*, which is, as one ſaith, the dagger which love draws in God's quarrel. Such was Lot's againſt the Sodomites, and that of Moſes againſt the idolatrous Iſraelites. When Servetus condemned Zuinglius for his harſhneſs, his anſwer was, *In aliis manſuetus ero, in blaſphemiis in Chriſtum, non ita*; In other caſes I will be mild, but in the cauſe of Chriſt not ſo. That which the world calls moderation and mildneſs here, is in God's account ſtupidity and cowardlineſs; neither of theſe are that which I am now perſuading you to keep your hearts againſt. But, (3.) There is a ſinful paſſion, that is the thing which endangers you. Now anger becomes ſinful when it is either *cauſeleſs*, Matth. v. 22. or *exceſſive*; and that either in meaſure or time, exceeding the value of the impulſive cauſe, be it more tranſient, or abiding; yet it is a ſin, and it is matter of humiliation before God. Now the means to keep the heart from it under provocations, are theſe:

Means 1. *Get low and humble thoughts of yourſelves, and then you will have meek ſpirits, and peaceable deportments towards others.*

The humble is ever the patient man; pride is the root of paſſion; a lofty will be a ſurly ſpirit; bladders blown up with wind, will not lie cloſe together; but prick them, and you may pack a thouſand in a little room: "Only by pride cometh contention," Prov. xiii. 10. When we over-rate ourſelves, then we think we are unworthily treated by others, and that provokes; and here, by the way, take notice of one great benefit of acquaintance with your own hearts, even the meekening and calming of your ſpirits. Chriſtian, methinks thou wouldſt

* Icon Cameronis.

know ſo much of thyſelf, that it is impoſſible any ſhould lay thee lower, or have baſer thoughts of thee than thou haſt of thyſelf. Some render the original of that text, Hab. ii. 5. thus: "The proud "man is as he that tranſgreſſeth by wine;" and drunkards, you know, are quarrelſome. O get more humility, and that will bring you more peace.

Means 2. *Be often ſweetening your ſpirits in communion with God, and they will not eaſily be imbittered with wrath towards men.*

A quiet *conſcience* never produced an unquiet *converſation:* the peace of God doth βραβευειν, rule in the heart, as an umpire appeaſing ſtrifes; for ſo much that word, Col. iii. 15. imports. Wrath and ſtrife are hugely oppoſite to the frame and temper of a ſpiritual heart, becauſe inconſiſtent with the delight and contentment of that dove-like ſpirit which loves a ſedate and quiet breaſt. O! ſaith the ſoul that feeds upon the ſweet communion of the Spirit, ſhall the ſparks of provocations now catch in my paſſions, and raiſe ſuch a ſmoke in my ſoul, as will offend and drive away the Comforter from me? This is ſo effectual a remedy againſt paſſion, that I durſt almoſt venture, in a Chriſtian of a haſty nature, to make long-ſuffering a ſign of communion with God. Seeſt thou ſuch a Chriſtian quiet and calm under provocations, it is very like his ſoul feeds upon ſuch ſweetneſs in God as he is loth to leave; and on the other ſide, ſeeſt thou a Chriſtian turbulent and clamorous, doubtleſs, all is not well within; his ſpirit is like a bone out of joint, which cannot move without pain and trouble.

Means 3. *Get due apprehenſions of the evil nature and effects of ſinful anger:* Ira furor brevis; *anger is a ſhort madneſs, (ſaith one;)* Ira animæ febris, *(ſaith another;) anger is the fever of the ſoul; It is the* interregnum and eclipſe of reaſon, *(ſaith a third).*

The effects of it are alſo very ſad.

(1.) "It grieves the Spirit of God," Eph. iv. 30. baniſhes him from that breaſt in which it rages and tumultuates: God is the God of peace; the preſence and comforts of God are only enjoyed in a calm. It is a golden note one gives upon the forecited text, God doth not uſually bleſs with peace of conſcience, ſuch as make no conſcience of peace. (2.) It gives advantage to the devil, Eph. iv. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and diſcontented ſpirit, and finds no reſt but in reſtleſs hearts? he lives like the *ſalamander,* in fires of contention; he beſtirs himſelf when the ſpirits are in a commotion; ſometimes he fills the heart with revengeful thoughts, ſometimes he fills the lips, and inflames the tongue with indecent language; even a meek Moſes ſometimes ſpeaks unadviſedly with his lips. (3.) It diſ-tunes the ſpirit for duty; upon this account the apoſtle diſſuades huſbands and wives from jarring carriages and contentions, that their prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. iii. 7. All acts of worſhip muſt be ſuitable to the object of worſhip; but God is the God of peace, the God of love.

(4.) To mention no more, it diſparages the Chriſtian religion. How would Plato and Pythagoras ſhame us, if they were now living? Chriſt was a lamb for meekneſs, and doth it become his followers to be like lions? O keep your hearts, or you will at once loſe not only your own peace, but the credit of religion.

Means 4. *Conſider how ſweet a thing it is to a Chriſtian to conquer his corruptions, and carry away the ſpoils of them.*

" He that is ſlow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that " ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city," Prov. xvi. 32. Is there any content in venting a paſſion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comeſt in a calm mood, or upon a death-bed to review thy life, how comfortable then will it be to reflect upon the conqueſts thou haſt got by the fear of God, over the evil propenſions of thine own heart! It was a memorable ſaying of Valentinian the emperor when he came to die: ' Amongſt all my conqueſts (ſaid he) ' there is but one that now comforts me; and being aſked what that ' was, he anſwered, I have overcome my worſt enemy, mine own ' naughty heart.'

Means 5. *Shame yourſelves by ſetting before you thoſe eminent patterns that have been moſt excellent for meekneſs.*

Above all, compare your ſpirits with the Spirit of Chriſt; " Learn " of me (ſaith he), for I am meek and lowly," Matth. xi. 29. Chriſt was meek and lowly, but I am proud and paſſionate; it was the high commendation of Moſes Numb. xii. 3. " Now the man Moſes was " meek above all the men of the earth: and this was the man that " knew God to face." It is ſaid of Calvin and Urſin, that they both were of choleric natures, but yet had ſo learned the meekneſs of Chriſt as not to utter one word, under the greateſt provocation, unbeſeeming religion. When I read the pretty ſtories of the very heathens that never had the advantages that we have, how the Pythagoreans, whatever feuds had been among them in the day, would huſh all by ſending to each other this meſſage, *The ſun is almoſt ſet;* and that of Plato to his ſcholar, *I would beat thee if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderneſs Lycurgus ſhewed to an inſolent fellow that had ſtruck out one of his eyes, I am aſhamed to ſee how much Chriſtians are out-ſhot by heathens; who, by mere moral arguments and precepts, had thus meekened their ſpirits, and conquered their paſſions. The dim light of nature could teach Seneca to ſay, 'That anger will hurt a man more than the offence; for there is a certain bound in the offence, but I know not how far mine anger will carry me. It is a ſhame that theſe men who came ſo far behind us in means and advantages, ſhould ſo far out-ſtrip us in meekneſs and patience.

Means 6. Laſtly, *Avoid all irritating occaſions.*

He that will not hear the clapper, muſt not pull the rope: " Grie- " vous words ſtir up anger," ſaith Solomon, Prov. xv. 1. Do not only pray, nd reſolve againſt it, but get as far as you can out of the

way of it, it is true ſpiritual valour, to run as faſt, and far as we can, out of ſin's way: If you can but avoid anger in its firſt riſe, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this ſin as it is with other ſins; other ſins grow to their full ſtrength by degrees, their firſt motions are the weakeſt; but this ſin is born in its full ſtrength, it is ſtrongeſt at firſt; withſtand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations ariſe.

*Seaſon* 9. The ninth ſeaſon of exerting our greateſt diligence, 'Is, 'the critical hour of temptation, wherein Satan lays cloſe ſiege to the 'fort-royal of a Chriſtian's heart, and often ſurprizes it for want of 'watchfulneſs: to keep the heart now, is no leſs a mercy than a du-'ty; few Chriſtian's are ſo well ſkilled in detecting the fallacies, and 'retorting the arguments by which Satan uſes to draw them to ſin, as 'to come off ſafe in thoſe encounters. "Watch and pray (ſaith '"our Lord) leſt ye enter into temptation," Mark xiv. 38.' Even an eminent David, and a wiſe Solomon, have ſmarted for their careleſſneſs, at ſuch a time as this. The ninth caſe therefore ſhall be this,

Caſe 9. *How a Chriſtian, when ſtrongly ſolicited by the devil to ſin, may keep his heart from yielding to the temptation.*

Now there are ſix ſpecial arguments by which Satan ſubtilly inſinuates and winds in the temptation; in all which I ſhall offer thee ſome help for the keeping of thy heart; and the firſt is this:

*Argument* 1. The firſt argument is drawn from the pleaſure of ſin: O (ſaith Satan) here is pleaſure to be enjoyed: the temptation comes with a ſmiling countenance, and charming voice: what, art thou ſo phlegmatic and dull a ſoul, as not to feel the powerful charms of pleaſure? Who can with-hold himſelf from ſuch delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this argument of pleaſure upon the tempter; which is done two ways.

1. Thou telleſt me, Satan, that ſin is pleaſant; be it ſo: But are the gripes of conſcience, and the flames of hell ſo too? Is it pleaſant to feel the wounds and throbs of conſcience? If ſo, why did Peter weep ſo bitterly? Matth. xxvi. 75 Why did David cry out of broken bones? Pſal. li. I hear what thou ſayeſt of the pleaſure of ſin, and I have read what David hath ſaid of the terrible effects of ſin in his Pſalm to bring to remembrance, Pſal. xxxviii. ver. 2. "Thine "arrows ſtick faſt in me, and thy hand preſſeth me ſore:" ver. 3. "There is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh becauſe of thine anger; neither "is there any reſt in my bones, becauſe of my ſin:" ver. 4. "For "mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burden; they "are too heavy for me:" ver. 5. "My wounds ſtink, and are cor-"rupt, becauſe of my fooliſhneſs:" ver. 6. "I am troubled, I am "bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long:" ver. 7. "My loins are filled with a loathſome diſeaſe, and there is no ſound-"neſs in my fleſh," ver. 8. "I am feeble and ſore broken, I have "roared by reaſon of the diſquietneſs of my heart."

Here I ſee the true face of ſin; if I yield to thy temptation, I muſt either feel theſe pangs of conſcience, or the flames of hell.

2. What talkeſt thou of the pleaſure of ſin, when, by experience, I know there is more true pleaſure in the mortification, than can be in the commiſſion of ſin? O how ſweet is it to pleaſe God, to obey conſcience, to preſerve inward peace! To be able to ſay, in this trial, I have diſcovered the ſincerity of my heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I ſee that I truly hate ſin. Hath ſin any ſuch delight as this? This will choak that temptation.

*Arg.* 2. The ſecond argument is drawn from the ſecrecy of ſin. O (ſaith Satan) this ſin will never diſgrace thee abroad, none ſhall know it.

This argument may be retorted, and the heart ſecured thus: thou ſayeſt, none ſhall know it; but, Satan, canſt thou find a place void of the divine preſence for me to ſin in? Thus Job ſecured his heart from this temptation, Job xiii. 4. "Doth he not ſee my ways, and "count all my ſteps?" Therefore he makes a covenant with his eyes, ver. 1. After the ſame manner Solomon teacheth us to retort this temptation, Prov. v. 20, 21. "And why my ſon wilt thou be "raviſhed with a ſtrange woman, and embrace the boſom of a ſtran-"ger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and "he pondereth all his goings." What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the preſent? I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the world ſhall know it too; for the word aſſures me, Luke viii. 17. "That what now is done in ſecret, ſhall "be proclaimed as upon the houſe top." Beſides, is not my conſcience as a thouſand witneſſes! Do I owe no reverence to myſelf? Could the heathen man ſay, *Turpe quid auſurus, te ſine teſte time;* When thou art tempted to commit ſin, fear thyſelf without any other witneſs: And ſhall not I be afraid to ſin before mine own conſcience, which always hath a reproof in its mouth, or a pen in its hand, to record my moſt ſecret actions?

*Arg.* 3. The third argument by which Satan tempteth to ſin is taken from the gain and profit ariſing out of it: why ſo nice and ſcrupulous? it is but to ſtretch the conſcience a little, and thou mayeſt make thyſelf: now is thy opportunity!

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous ſnare by retorting the temptation thus: But what a profit will it be, if a man ſhould gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul? Shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this world? There is an immortal ſpirit dwelling in this earthly tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, which muſt live to all eternity when this world ſhall lie in white aſhes. A ſoul for which Jeſus Chriſt ſhed his precious and invaluable blood. I was ſent into this world to provide for this ſoul; indeed God hath alſo committed to me the care of my body, but, (as * one happily ex-

* Goſpel-Glaſs, p. 3.

preſſes it) with this difference; a maſter commits two things to a ſervant—the child, and the child's clothes; will the maſter thank the ſervant, if he plead, I have kept the clothes, but I have neglected the life of the child?

*Arg.* 4. The fourth argument is drawn from the ſmallneſs of the ſin; it is but a little one, a ſmall matter, a trifle; who would ſtand upon ſuch niceties?

This argument may be retorted three ways.

1. But is the majeſty of heaven a little one too? If I commit this ſin, I muſt offend and wrong a great God, Iſa. xl. 15, 16, 17,—22.

2. Is there any little hell to torment little ſinners in? Are not the leaſt ſinners there filled with the fulneſs of wrath? O there is great wrath treaſured up for ſuch as the world counts little ſinners.

3. The leſs the ſin, the leſs the inducement to commit it: What, ſhall I break with God for a trifle? Deſtroy my peace, wound my conſcience, grieve the Spirit, and all this for nothing? O what madneſs is this!

*Arg.* 5. A fifth argument is drawn from the grace of God, and hopes of pardon: Come, God will paſs by this as an infirmity, he will not be extreme to mark it;

But ſtay, my heart;

1. Where do I find a promiſe of mercy to preſumptuous ſinners? Indeed for involuntary ſurpriſals, unavoidable aud lamented infirmities, there is a pardon of courſe; but where is the promiſe to a daring ſinner, that ſins upon preſumption of pardon? Pauſe a while, my ſoul, upon that ſcripture, Numb. xv. 27,—30. "And if a ſoul "ſin through ignorance, then he ſhall bring a ſhe-goat of the firſt "year for a ſin-offering, &c. But the ſoul that doth ought preſump-"tuouſly, the ſame reproacheth the Lord, and that ſoul ſhall be cut "off from among his people."

2. If God be a God of ſo much mercy, how can I abuſe ſo good a God? ſhall I take ſo glorious an attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuſe it unto ſin? Shall I wrong him becauſe he is good? Or ſhould not rather the goodneſs of God lead me to repentance? Rom. ii. 4. "There is mercy with thee that thou mayeſt be feared," Pſal. cxxx. 4.

*Arg.* 6. *Laſtly*, Sometimes Satan encourages to ſin from the examples of good and holy men; thus and thus they have ſinned and been reſtored, therefore this may conſiſt with grace, and thou be ſaved nevertheleſs. The danger of this temptation is avoided, and the heart ſecured, by retorting the argument theſe three ways:

1. Though good men may commit the ſame ſin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good man venture to ſin upon ſuch a ground and encouragement as this?

2. Did God record theſe examples for my imitation, or for my warning? Are they not ſet up as ſea-marks, that I might avoid the rocks upon which they ſplit? 1 Cor. x. 6. "Now theſe were our

" examples, to the intent that we ſhould not luſt after evil things, " as they alſo luſted."

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for ſin? O, I dare not follow them in the ways of ſin! *quia me veſtiga terrent;* Leſt God ſhould plunge me into the deeps of horror, into which he caſt them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation to ſin.

*Seaſon* 10. 'The tenth ſpecial ſeaſon to keep the heart with all di-
' ligence, is the time of ſpiritual darkneſs and doubting, when it is
' with the ſoul as it was with Paul in his dangerous voyage, neither
' ſun, nor moon, nor ſtar appears for many days: When by reaſon
' of the hidings of God's face, the prevalency of corruption, and the
' inevidence of grace, the ſoul is even ready to give up all its hopes
' and comforts for loſt; to draw ſad and deſperate concluſions upon
' itſelf; to call its former comforts vain deluſions; its grace hypo-
' criſy. When the ſerene and clear heavens are overcaſt with dark
' clouds, yea, filled with thunders and horrible tempeſts, when the
' poor penſive ſoul ſits down and weeps forth this ſad lamentation,
' " My hope is periſhed from the Lord!" Now to keep the heart
' from ſinking in ſuch a day as this, to enable it to maintain its own
' ſincerity, is a matter of great difficulty. The tenth caſe then will be
' this:'

Caſe 10. *How the people of God, in dark and doubting ſeaſons, may keep their hearts from entertaining ſuch ſad concluſions about their eſtates, as deſtroy their peace, and unfit them for their duty.*

There are two general heads to which the grounds of doubting our ſincerity may be reduced. (1.) God's carriage towards the ſoul, either in the time of ſome extraordinary affliction, or of ſome long and ſad deſertion. Or, (2.) The ſoul's carriage towards God: And here it uſually argues againſt the truth of its own graces, either (1.) From its relapſes into the ſame ſins from which it had formerly riſen with ſhame and ſorrow. Or, (2.) From the ſenſible declining of its affections from God. Or, (3.) From the exceſs of the affections towards creature-comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4.) From its enlargements in public, and often ſtraitnings in private duties. Or, (5.) From ſome horrid injections of Satan, with which the ſoul is greatly perplexed. Or, laſtly, From God's ſilence and ſeeming denial of its long depending ſuits and prayers.

Theſe are the common grounds of thoſe ſad concluſions: Now in order to the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of the heart in this condition, it will be neceſſary,

1. That you be acquainted with ſome general truths, which have a tendency to the ſettlement of a trembling and doubting ſoul.

2. That you be rightly inſtructed about the forementioned particulars, which are the grounds of your doubting.

The general truths requiſite for poor doubting ſouls to be acquainted with, are theſe:

1. *That every working and appearance of hypocrisy doth not presently prove the person in whom it is, to be an hypocrite.* You must carefully distinguish between the *presence* and *predominancy* of hypocrisy: There are remains of deceitfulness in the best hearts; David and Peter had sad experience of it; yet the standing frame and general bent of the heart being upright, it did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. *That we ought as well to hear what can be said for us as against us:* It is the sin of upright hearts sometimes to use an over-rigid, and mercileſs severity against themselves: They do not indifferently consider the case of their own souls: It is in this case, as Solomon speaks in another, Prov. xii. 7. "There is that maketh himself "rich, and yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself poor, "and yet hath great riches." It is the damning sin of the self-flattering hypocrite, to make his condition better than it is: And it is the sin and folly of some upright ones, to make their condition worse than indeed it is. Why should you be such enemies to your own peace? To read over the evidences of God's love to your souls, as a man doth a book which he intends to confute? Why do you study to find evasions, to turn off those comforts which are due to you? It is said of Joseph, that he was minded to put away his espoused Mary, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the Holy Ghost: And this may be your case. And a third truth is this:

3. *That many a saint hath charged and condemned himself for that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for.* "Why "hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear," (saith the church) Isa. lxiii. 17. and yet the verse before manifests, that their hearts were not so hardened: Godly Bradford wrote himself an hypocrite, a painted sepulchre; yet doubtless God acquitted him of that charge.

4. *Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God, is not a sufficient ground of questioning their sincerity.* There are many more things to trouble you, than there are to stumble you: If upon every slip and failing through infirmity, you should question all that ever was wrought upon you, your life must be made up of doubtings and fears: You can never attain a settled peace, nor live that life of praise and thankfulness, the gospel calls for.

5. *The soul is not at all times fit to pass judgment upon its own condition:* To be sure in the dark day of desertion, when the soul is benighted; and in the stormy day of temptation, when the soul is in a hurry, it is utterly unfit to judge its estate; "Examine your hearts "upon your beds, and be still," Psal. iv. This is rather a season for watching and resisting, than for judging and determining.

6. *That every breach of peace with God, is not a breach of covenant with God.* The wife hath many weaknesses and failings, often grieves and displeases her husband; yet in the main is faithful, and truly loves him: These failings may cause him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his love, or deny his relation. "Return, O backsliding Israel, for I am married unto you."

7. Laſtly, *Whatever our ſin, or trouble be, it ſhould rather drive us to God, than from God.* "Pardon my ſin for it is great," Pſal. xxv. 11. Suppoſe it be true, that thou haſt ſo and ſo ſinned, that thou art thus long and ſadly deſerted: Yet it is a falſe inference, that therefore thou ſhouldſt be diſcouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digeſted theſe ſeven eſtabliſhing truths, if ſtill the doubt remain, then conſider what may be replied to the particular grounds of theſe doubts. As,

1. You doubt, and are ready to conclude, the Lord hath no regard or love for your ſouls, becauſe of ſome extraordinary affliction which is come upon you: But I would not have thy ſoul ſo to conclude, till thou be able ſatisfactorily to anſwer theſe three queſtions.

*Queſtion* 1. If great troubles and afflictions be marks of God's hatred, why ſhould not impunity and conſtant proſperity be tokens of his love? For *contrariorum contraria eſt ratio & conſequentia?* of contrary things, there is a contrary reaſon and conſequence: But is this ſo indeed? or ſaith not the ſcripture quite otherwiſe? Prov. i. 32. "The proſperity of fools deſtroys them." So Pſal. xxxvii. 5.

*Queſt.* 2. Dare I draw the ſame concluſion upon all others that have been as much, yea, more afflicted than myſelf? If this argument conclude againſt thee, then ſo it doth againſt every one in thy condition; yea, the greater the affliction of any child of God hath been, the more ſtrongly the argument ſtill concludes: And then woe to David, Job, Heman, Paul, and all that have been afflicted as they were.

*Queſt.* 3. Had God exempted you only from thoſe troubles, which all other his people feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you than this? Eſpecially ſince the ſcripture ſaith, Heb. xii. 8. "If ye be without chaſtenings, whereof all are partakers, then "are ye baſtards, and not ſons."

Oh how is our Father put to it by froward children! If he afflicts, then one cries, he loves me not: If he exempt from afflictions, others queſtion his love upon that ground. Surely you have other work to do, under the rod, than this.

2. Or do you raſhly infer, the Lord hath no love for you, becauſe he hides his face from you; that your condition is miſerable, becauſe dark and uncomfortable? Before you draw ſuch raſh concluſions, ſee what anſwer you can give to theſe four following queries.

Query 1. *If any action of God towards his people will bear a favourable, as well as a harſh and ſevere conſtruction, why ſhould not his people interpret it in the beſt ſenſe?* And is not this ſuch? May he not have a deſign of love, as well as of hatred, in this diſpenſation? May he not depart for a ſeaſon, and not for ever? Yea, that he might not depart for ever. You are not the firſt that have miſtaken God's ends in deſertion. Iſa. xlix. 14 "Sion "ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God hath forgotten me."

Was it ſo, indeed? Nothing leſs. Ver. 15. "Can a mother for-"get," &c.

Query 2. *Do you find the marks of an abſolute, total and final deſertion upon your own ſpirits, that you are ſo apt to conclude yours to be ſuch?* Do you find your hearts inclined to forſake God? Have you loſt your conſcientious tenderneſs in point of ſin? If ſo, ſad characters appear upon you indeed; but if in this dark hour you are as tender of ſin as ever, as much reſolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forſake God, let him do what he will with me: O no, I cannot. If your hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited, and temporary deſertion; by this he ſtill keeps his intereſt in your hearts, a ſure ſign he will return, and viſit you again.

Query 3. *Is ſenſe and feeling a competent judge of God's actions and deſigns?* Or may a man ſafely rely upon its teſtimony, after ſo many diſcoveries of the fallibility of it? Is this a ſound argument? If God had any love for my ſoul, if it were not quite gone, I ſhould feel it now, as well as in former times; but I cannot feel it, therefore it is quite gone. Do you not know the ſun ſtill keeps on his courſe in the heavens, even in dull and cloſe weather, when you cannot ſee it? And may it not be ſo with the love of God? Read Iſa. l. 10. May not I as well conclude in winter, when the flowers have hid their beautiful heads under ground, they are quite dead and gone, becauſe I cannot find them in December where I ſaw them in May?

*Query* 4 Think you the Lord cares not to break his children's hearts, and his own promiſe too? Hath he no more regard to either? If he return no more, theſe muſt be the conſequents, Iſa. lvii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 5.

Well, then, from God's carriage towards you, either in affliction, or deſertion, no ſuch diſcouraging, heart-ſinking concluſions can be inferred. Next, let us ſee whether they may not be inferred from our carriage towards God; and here the principal grounds of doubting are ſuch as theſe:

1. I have fallen again into the ſame ſin from which I have formerly riſen with repentance and reſolution; therefore my ſinning is cuſtomary ſinning; a ſpot that is not the ſpot of God's children. Hence the upright ſoul trembles; upon this it is ready to affirm, that all its former humiliations for, and oppoſitions unto ſin, were but acts of hypocriſy. But ſtay, poor trembling heart.

Query 1. *If this be ſo, how comes it to paſs that Chriſt put ſuch a favourable conſtruction upon the diſciples ſleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it?* Matth. xxvi. 40, 41. and how is it that we find in ſcripture ſo many promiſes made to God's people, not only upon their firſt ſins, but upon their backſlidings alſo? Jer. iii. 22. Hoſ. xiv. 4.

Query 2. *Is not your repentance and care renewed as often as your guilt is renewed?* Yea, the oftener you ſin, the more you are troubled; it

is not ſo in cuſtomary ſinning, the riſe whereof * Bernard excellently diſcovers. 1. (Saith he) When a man accuſtomed to good, ſinneth grievouſly, it ſeems inſupportable, yea, he ſeems to deſcend alive into hell. 2. In proceſs of time it ſeems not inſupportable, but heavy; and betwixt inſupportable and heavy, there is no ſmall deſcent.

3. Next it becomes light, his conſcience ſmites but faintly, and he feels not the ſtripes of it. 4. Then there is not only a total inſenſibleneſs of it, but that which was bitter and diſpleaſing is now become ſweet and pleaſing, in ſome degree. 5. Then it is turned into cuſtom, and not only pleaſes, but daily pleaſes. Laſtly, Cuſtom is turned into nature; he cannot be pulled away from it, but defends and pleads for it: This is cuſtomary ſinning, this is the way of the wicked; but the quite contrary is your condition.

Query 3. *Are you ſure, from ſcripture-grounds, that good men may not relapſe again and again into the ſame ſin?* It is true, as for groſs ſins, they do not uſe to relapſe into them: David committed adultery no more: Paul perſecuted the church no more: Peter denied Chriſt no more: But I ſpeak of ordinary infirmities. Job's friends were good men, yet (ſaith he) chap. xix. 3. "Theſe ten times have ye reproached me." So then, no ſuch concluſions follow from this firſt ground of doubting.

2. *The ſecond ground is the declining and withering of our affections to ſpiritual things.* O! (ſaith the upright ſoul) if ever I had been planted a right ſeed, I ſhould have been as a green olive tree in the houſe of my God; but my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But ſtay,

Query 1. *May you not be miſtaken about the decay of grace, and fading of your affections?* What if they are not ſo quick and raviſhing as at firſt, may not that be recompenſed in the ſpirituality and ſolidity of them now? Phil. i. 9. "I pray God your love may abound more "and more in all judgment:" It may be more *ſolid*, though not ſo *fervent*; or do not you miſtake by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward to what once you were? It is a good note of Ames, we diſcern the growth of grace, as the growth of plants, which we perceive rather *Creviſſe quam creſcere*, to *have* grown, than to grow

Query 2. *But grant it be ſo indeed, as you affirm, muſt it needs follow, that the root of the matter is not in you?* David's laſt ways are diſtinguiſhed from his firſt, 2 Chron. xvii. 3. and yet both firſt and laſt a holy man. The church of Epheſus is charged by Chriſt for leaving her firſt love, and yet a golden candleſtick, many precious ſaints in that church, Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of theſe ſad concluſions is, the exceſs of your affections to ſome creature-enjoyments. I fear I love the creature more than God; and if ſo, my love is but hypocritical: I ſometimes

* *Lib. de Conſc. p.* 109.

feel ſtronger and more ſenſible motions of my heart to earthly comforts, than I do to heavenly objects, therefore my ſoul is not upright in me. But ſtay, O ſoul,

Query 1. *May not a man love God more ſolidly and ſtrongly than the creature, and yet his affections to the creature be ſometimes moved more violently and ſenſibly than towards God?* As rooted malice argues a ſtronger hatred than a ſudden, though more violent paſſion: So we muſt meaſure our love, not by a violent motion of it now and then, but by the depth of the root, and conſtancy of its actings. Becauſe David was ſo paſſionately moved for Abſalom, Joab concludes, that if he had lived, and all the people died, "it would have pleaſed him "well," 2 Sam. xix. 7. But that was argued more like a ſoldier than a logician.

Query 2. *If you indeed love the creature for itſelf, if you make it your end, and religion but a mean, then the concluſion is rightly drawn upon you.* But if you love the creature in reference to God, and ſee nothing in it ſeparated from him, though ſometimes your affections offend in the exceſs; this is conſiſtent with ſincere love to God. To love the creature inordinately, i. e. to put it in God's room, and make it a man's end; this is the love of a carnal heart; to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more affection to it than we ought, is ſometimes the ſin of the beſt hearts.

Query. 3. *Have not many ſouls feared, as you do, that when Chriſt and creatures ſhall ſtand as competitors in ſome eminent trial, they ſhould forſake Chriſt rather than the creature; and yet when brought to that dilemma, have been able to caſt all the world at their heels for Chriſt?* Many of the martyrs had ſuch fears, and they were ſatisfied; the prevalency of love is beſt ſeen at parting: there may be more love to Chriſt in thy ſoul, than thou art now aware of; and if God bring thee to ſuch a pinch, thou mayeſt ſee it.

4. A fourth ground of theſe ſad concluſions is from hence, that we find our hearts ſometimes more ſtraitened in private, than in public duties. O! if my ſoul were ſincere, its actings in duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a Phariſee upon this ground. It is ſad, indeed, we ſhould at any time find our hearts ſtraitened in private. But,

Query 1. *Do not all thine enlargements in duty, whether public or private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of influences; and according as he gives out, or holds back thoſe influences, ſo art thou enlarged, or ſtraitened?* And what if ſometimes he pleaſes to give that in a public, which he withholds in a private duty, as long as thy ſoul is ſatisfied in neither without communion with God, and the ſtraitneſs of thy heart is indeed its burden? Doth that argue thee to be an hypocrite?

Query 2. *Doſt thou not make conſcience of private duties, and ſet thyſelf as before the Lord in them?* Indeed, if thou live in the conſtant neglect, or careleſs performance of them; if thou art *curious* about public, and *careleſs* about private duties, that would be a ſad ſign; but when you have conſcientiouſly performed, and often met with God in them, it

will not follow that you are inſincere, becauſe that communion is ſometimes interrupted. Beſides,

Query 3. *May there not be ſomething, at ſometimes, in a public, which is wanting in a private duty, to raiſe and advantage thine affections?* God may ſometimes make uſe of the melting affections of them with whom thou heareſt or prayeſt, as petty inſtruments to move thy affections; this advantage is wanting in private; therefore from hence (the caſe ſo ſtanding) no ſuch inference can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from thoſe horrid injections of Satan with which the ſoul is greatly perplexed; by theſe I may ſee what an heart I have: Can grace be where theſe are?

Yes, grace may be where ſuch thoughts are, though not where they are lodged, and conſented to. Doſt thou cry out under the burden? Enter thy proteſt in heaven againſt them, ſtrive to keep up holy and reverend thoughts of God; then it is *violence*, not a voluntary *proſtitution*.

6. The laſt ground of theſe ſad concluſions is, the Lord's long ſilence and ſeeming denial of our long depending ſuits and prayers. O if God had any regard to my ſoul, he would have heard my cries before now! But I have no anſwer from him, therefore no intereſt in him. But ſtay, doubting ſoul,

Query 1. *Have not many ſaints ſtumbled upon this ſtone before thee?* Pſal. xxxi. 22. "I ſaid in my haſte I am cut off from before thine "eyes: nevertheleſs thou heardeſt the voice of my ſupplication." So the church, Lam. iii. 44. "Thou covereſt thyſelf with a cloud, "that our prayers ſhould not paſs through." Jonah ii. 4. "Then "ſaid I, I am caſt out of thy ſight." And may not you be miſtaken in this matter as well as they?

Query 2. *Though God's abhorring and final rejecting prayer, be an argument of his abhorring the perſon that prays; yet dare we conclude ſo from a mere ſuſpenſion of the anſwer? God may bear long with his own elect that cry unto him day and night*, Luke xviii. 7.

Query 3. *Can you deny but that there are ſome ſigns appearing in your ſouls, even whilſt God ſuſpends his anſwer, that argue your prayers are not rejected by him?* As, (1.) Though no anſwer come, yet you are ſtill reſolved to wait: You dare not ſay as that profane wretch did, 2 Kings vi. 33. "This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait "for him any longer?" (2.) You can clear and juſtify God ſtill, and lay the reaſon and cauſe of his ſilence upon yourſelves. So did David, Pſal. xxii. 2, 3. "O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou "heareſt not; and in the night, and am not ſilent; but thou art ho-"ly," &c. (3.) The ſuſpenſion of God's anſwer makes you inquiſitive into your own hearts, what evils are there that obſtruct your prayers: So the church, Lam. iii. 8. "He ſhutteth out my prayer." And how doth this work? You may ſee, ver. 40. "Let us ſearch "and try our ways." Well, then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your ſouls.

And thus I have ſhewn you how to keep your hearts, in a dark and doubting ſeaſon, from thoſe deſperate concluſions of unbelief. God forbid any falſe heart ſhould encourage itſelf from theſe things; it is our unhappineſs that when we give ſaints and ſinners their proper portions, that each of them are ſo prone to take up the others part. *Caution.*

*Seaſon* 11. The eleventh ſpecial ſeaſon calling for this diligence 'to 'keep your hearts, is, when ſufferings for religion come to an height, 'then look to your hearts, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. "All theſe are 'the beginning of ſorrows, and they ſhall deliver you up to be af-'flicted, and ſhall kill you; and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for 'my name's ſake; and then ſhall many be offended." When ſuf-'ferings for religion grow hot, then bleſſed is he that is not offend-'ed in Chriſt. Troubles are then at an height, (1.) When a man's 'neareſt friends and relations forſake and leave him, Mic. vii. 5, 6. '2 Tim. iv. 16. When a man is engaged alone. (2.) When it comes 'to reſiſting to blood Heb. xii. 4. (3.) When temptations are pre-'ſented to us in our ſufferings, Heb. xi. 37. (4.) When eminent per-'ſons for profeſſion turn aſide, and deſert the cauſe of Chriſt, 2 Tim. 'ii. 19. (5.) When God hides his face in a ſuffering hour, Jer. xvii. '17. (6.) When Satan falls upon us with ſtrong temptations, to 'queſtion the grounds of our ſufferings, or the ſoul's intereſt in 'Chriſt: Now it is hard to keep the heart from turning back, and the 'ſteps from declining God's ways.' The eleventh queſtion, then, ſhall be this:

Caſe 11. *How the heart may be kept from relapſing under the greateſt ſufferings for religion?* If the bitterneſs of ſufferings at any time cauſe thy ſoul to diſtaſte the way of God, and take up thoughts of forſaking it; ſtay thine heart under that temptation, by propounding theſe eight queſtions ſolemnly to it.

Queſtion 1. *What reproach and diſhonour ſhall I pour upon Chriſt, and religion, by deſerting him at ſuch a time as this?* This will proclaim to all the world, that how much ſoever I have boaſted of the promiſes, yet, when it comes to the trial, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them: And how will this open the mouths of Chriſt's enemies to blaſpheme? O better had I never been born, than that worthy name ſhould be blaſphemed thro' me! Shall I furniſh the triumphs of the uncircumciſed? Shall I make mirth in hell? O if I did but value the name of Chriſt, as much as many a wicked man values his own name, I could never endure to ſee it expoſed to ſuch contempt! Will proud duſt and aſhes venture death, yea, hell, rather than a blot upon their names? And ſhall I venture nothing to ſalve the honour and reputation of Chriſt?

Queſt. 2. *Dare I violate my conſcience to ſave my fleſh? Who ſhall comfort me when conſcience wounds me?* What comfort is there in life, liberty, or friends, when peace is taken away from the inner man? When Conſtantius threatened to cut off Samoſatenus's right-

hand, if he would not ſubſcribe ſomewhat that was againſt his conſcience, he held up both his hands to the meſſenger that was ſent, ſaying, he ſhall cut off both, rather than I will do it: Farewell all peace, joy, and comfort, from that day forward. "Had Zimri peace, "that ſlew his maſter?" ſaid Jezebel. So ſay I here, had Judas peace? Had Spira peace? And ſhall you have peace, if you tread in their ſteps? O conſider what you do.

Queſt. 3. *Is not the public intereſt of Chriſt and religion, infinitely more than any private intereſt of my own?* It is a famous paſſage, that of Terentius, captain to Adrian the emperor, when he preſented a petition to Adrian, that the Chriſtians might have a temple by themſelves, to worſhip God apart from the Arians: The emperor tore his petition, and threw it away, bidding him aſk ſomething for himſelf, and it ſhould be granted. But he modeſtly gathered up the pieces of his petition again, and told him, 'If he could not be heard 'in God's cauſe, he would never aſk any thing for himſelf.' Yea, even, Tully, though an heathen, could ſay, *Ne immortalitatem quidem contra rempublicam;* he would not accept even of immortality itſelf, againſt the commonwealth. O if we had more public, we ſhould not have ſuch cowardly ſpirits!

Queſt. 4. *Did Jeſus Chriſt ſerve me ſo, when, for my ſake he expoſed himſelf to far greater ſufferings than can be before me?* His ſufferings were great indeed, he ſuffered from all hands, in all his offices, in every member, not only in his body, but in his ſoul; yea, the ſufferings of his ſoul were the very ſoul of his ſufferings: Witneſs the bloody ſweat in the garden; witneſs that heart-melting, and heaven-rending outcry upon the croſs, "My God, my God, why "haſt thou forſaken me?" And yet he flinched not, "he endured "the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame." Alas! what are my ſufferings, compared with Chriſt's? He hath drunk up all that vinegar and gall that would make my ſufferings bitter. When one of the martyrs was aſked why he was ſo merry at his death? O, ſaid he, it is becauſe the ſoul of Chriſt was ſo heavy at his death. Did Chriſt bear ſuch a burden for me, with unbroken patience, and conſtancy; and ſhall I ſhrink back from momentary, and light afflictions, for him?

Queſt. 5. *Is not eternal life worth the ſuffering of a moment's pain?* If I ſuffer with him, I ſhall reign with him. O how will men venture life and limb for a fading crown, ſwim through ſeas of blood to a throne! and will I venture nothing? ſuffer nothing for the crown of glory that fadeth not away? My dog will follow my horſe's heels from morning to night, take many a weary ſtep through mire and dirt, rather than leave me, though at night all he gets by it is but bones and blows: If my ſoul had any true greatneſs, any ſparks of generoſity in it, how would it deſpiſe the ſufferings of the way, for the glory of the end? how would it break down all difficulties before it? whilſt, by an eye of faith, it ſees the fore-runner, who is already entered, ſtanding, as it were, upon the walls of heaven, with the crown

in his hand, ſaying, "He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things." Come on, then, my ſoul, come on, there is eternal life laid up for them that, by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality, Rom. ii. 7.

Queſt. 6. *Can I ſo eaſily caſt off the ſociety and company of the ſaints, and give the right-hand of fellowſhip to the wicked?* How can I part with ſuch lovely companions as theſe have been? How often have I been benefited by their counſels? Ezra x. 3. how often refreſhed, warmed, and quickened by their company? Eccl. iv. 10, 11. how often have I faſted and prayed with them? What ſweet counſel have I taken with them, and gone to the houſe of God in company? And ſhall I now ſhake hands with them, and ſay, Farewel all ye ſaints for ever; I ſhall never be among you more: Come drunkards, ſwearers, blaſphemers, perſecutors, you ſhall be my everlaſting companions? O rather let my body and ſoul be rent aſunder, than that ever I ſhould ſay thus to the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.

Queſt. 7. *Have I ſeriouſly conſidered the terrible ſcripture-comminations againſt backſliders?* O my heart! dareſt thou turn thy back upon the very point of ſuch threatenings as theſe? Jer. xvii. 5, 6. "Thus ſaith the Lord, curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and "maketh fleſh his arm; and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord; "for he ſhall be like the heath in the deſert, and ſhall not ſee when "good cometh," i. e. The curſe of God ſhall wither him root and branch. And Heb. x. 26, 27. "If we ſin wilfully, after we have "received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſa-"criſice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and "fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries." And again, ver. 38. "If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in "him:" As if he ſhould ſay, 'Take him world, take him, devil, for 'your own, I have no delight in him.' O who dare draw back when God has hedged up the way with ſuch terrible threats as theſe!

Queſt. 8. *Can I look Chriſt in the face at the day of judgment if I deſert him now?*

"He that is aſhamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous "and ſinful generation, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed "when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels," Mark viii. 38. Yet a little while, and you ſhall ſee the ſign of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; the laſt trump ſhall ſound, the dead, both ſmall and great, even all that ſleep in the duſt ſhall awake, and come before that great white throne, on which Chriſt ſhall ſit in that day. And now do but imagine thou ſaweſt the trembling knees and quivering lips of guilty ſinners; imagine thou heardeſt the dreadful ſentence of the Judge upon them, "Go, ye curſed," &c. and then a cry. Oh! the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands, that there ſhall be.

Wouldſt thou deſert Chriſt now, to protract a poor, miſerable life on earth? If the word of God be true, if the ſayings of Chriſt be ſealed and faithful, this ſhall be the portion of the apoſtate. It is an eaſy thing to ſtop the mouth of conſcience now, but will it be eaſy to ſtop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart, that it depart not from the living God.

*Seaſon* 12. The twelfth ſeaſon of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greateſt care, is the time of ſickneſs: 'When 'a child of God draws nigh to eternity, when there are but a few 'ſands more in the upper part of his glaſs to run down; now Satan 'buſily beſtirs himſelf; of him it may be ſaid, as of the natural ſer-'pent, *nunquam niſi moriens producitur in longum;* he is never ſeen at 'his full length till dying: And now his great deſign, ſince he can-'not win the ſoul from God, is to diſcourage, and make it unwilling 'to go to God, though the gracious ſoul, with Jacob, ſhould then 'rouſe up itſelf upon a dying bed, and rejoice that the marriage-day 'of the Lamb is now almoſt come; though it ſhould then ſay, with 'dying Auſtin, *vivere renuo ut Chriſto vivam;* I deſpiſe life to be 'with Chriſt. Or as dying Milius, when one aſked him, whether he 'were willing to die? O ſaid he, *illius eſt nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad 'Chriſtum;* let him be unwilling to die who is unwilling to go to 'Chriſt. But O! what ſhrinking from death? What lothneſs to 'depart, may ſometimes (indeed too frequently) be obſerved in the 'people of God? How loth are ſome of them to take death by the 'cold hand? If ſuch a liberty were indulged to us, not to be diſſolv-'ed till we diſſolve ourſelves; when ſhould we ſay with St Paul, '"I deſire to be diſſolved?" Well then, the laſt caſe ſhall be this.

Caſe 12. *How the people of God, in times of ſickneſs, may get their hearts looſe from all earthly engagements, and perſuade them into a willingneſs to die.*

And there are ſeven arguments, which I ſhall urge upon the people of God at ſuch a time as this, to make them cheerfully entertain the meſſengers of death, and die as well as live, like ſaints. And the firſt is this:

Argument 1. Firſt, *The harmleſſneſs of death to the people of God.* Though it keep its *dart*, it hath loſt its ſting: A ſaint (to allude to that, Iſa xi. 8.) "May play upon the hole of the aſp, and put his "hand into the cockatrice's den." Death is the cockatrice, or aſp, the grave is his hole or den; a ſaint need not fear to put his hand boldly into it: It hath left and loſt its ſting in the ſides of Chriſt, 1 Cor xv. 55. "O death! where is thy ſting?" Why art thou afraid, O ſaint, that this ſickneſs may be thy death, as long as thou knoweſt that the death of Chriſt is the death of death? Indeed, if thou didſt die in thy ſins, as John viii. 21. if death, as a king, did reign over thee, Rom. v. 14. If it could feed upon thee, as the lion doth upon the prey he hath taken, as Pſalm xlix. 14. If "hell fol-"lowed the pale horſe," as it is, Rev. vi. 8. then thou mighteſt well

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Arg. 2. *Thy heart may be kept from ſhrinking back at ſuch a time as this, by conſidering the neceſſity of death, in order to the full fruition of God.*

Whether thou art willing to die or no, I aſſure thee there is no other way to obtain the full ſatisfaction of thy ſoul, and complete its happineſs; till the hand of death do thee the kind office to draw aſide the curtain of the fleſh, thy ſoul cannot ſee God: This animal life ſtands betwixt him and thee, 2 Cor. v. 6. "Whilſt we are at home "in the body, we are abſent from the Lord." Thy body muſt be refined and caſt into a new mould, elſe that new wine of heavenly glory would break it. Paul, in his higheſt rapture, 2 Cor. xii. 4. when he heard things unutterable, was then but as a ſtander-by, a looker-on, not admitted into the company as one of them; but as the angels are in our aſſemblies, ſo was Paul in that glorious aſſembly above, and no otherwiſe; and yet even for this he muſt, as it were, be taken out of the body, unclothed for a little time, to have a glimpſe of that glory, and then put on his clothes again. O then! who would not be willing to die for a full ſight and enjoyment of God? Methinks thy ſoul ſhould look and ſigh, like a priſoner, through the grates of this mortality; "O that I had wings like a dove, then would "I fly away, and be at reſt:" Moſt men need patience to die, but a ſaint that underſtands what death admits him to, ſhould rather need patience to live; methinks he ſhould often look out, and liſten on a death-bed for his Lord's coming; and when he receives the news of his approaching change, ſhould ſay, "The voice of my beloved! be-"hold, he cometh leaping over the mountains, ſkipping upon the "hills," Cant. ii. 8.

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Wouldſt thou deſert Chriſt now, to protract a poor, miſerable life on earth? If the word of God be true, if the ſayings of Chriſt be ſealed and faithful, this ſhall be the portion of the apoſtate. It is an eaſy thing to ſtop the mouth of conſcience now, but will it be eaſy to ſtop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart, that it depart not from the living God.

*Seaſon* 12. The twelfth ſeaſon of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greateſt care, is the time of ſickneſs: 'When 'a child of God draws nigh to eternity, when there are but a few 'ſands more in the upper part of his glaſs to run down; now Satan 'buſily beſtirs himſelf; of him it may be ſaid, as of the natural ſer-'pent, *nunquam niſi moriens producitur in longum;* he is never ſeen at 'his full length till dying: And now his great deſign, ſince he can-'not win the ſoul from God, is to diſcourage, and make it unwilling 'to go to God, though the gracious ſoul, with Jacob, ſhould then 'rouſe up itſelf upon a dying bed, and rejoice that the marriage-day 'of the Lamb is now almoſt come; though it ſhould then ſay, with 'dying Auſtin, *vivere renuo ut Chriſto vivam;* I deſpiſe life to be 'with Chriſt. Or as dying Milius, when one aſked him, whether he 'were willing to die? O ſaid he, *illius eſt nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad 'Chriſtum;* let him be unwilling to die who is unwilling to go to 'Chriſt. But O! what ſhrinking from death? What lothneſs to 'depart, may ſometimes (indeed too frequently) be obſerved in the 'people of God? How loth are ſome of them to take death by the 'cold hand? If ſuch a liberty were indulged to us, not to be diſſolv-'ed till we diſſolve ourſelves; when ſhould we ſay with St Paul, '"I deſire to be diſſolved?" Well then, the laſt caſe ſhall be this.

Caſe 12. *How the people of God, in times of ſickneſs, may get their hearts looſe from all earthly engagements, and perſuade them into a willingneſs to die.*

And there are ſeven arguments, which I ſhall urge upon the people of God at ſuch a time as this, to make them cheerfully entertain the meſſengers of death, and die as well as live, like ſaints. And the firſt is this:

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or did they ſleep till the reſurrection, as others have groundleſsly fancied; it had been a madneſs for Paul to deſire a diſſolution for the enjoyment of Chriſt: For if this were ſo, he enjoyed more of Chriſt whilſt his ſoul dwelt in its fleſhly tabernacle, than he ſhould out of it.

There are but two ways of the ſoul's living, known in ſcripture, viz. the life of *faith*, and the life of *viſion*, 1 Cor. v. 5. Thoſe two divideth all time, both preſent and future, betwixt them, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. If when faith fails, ſight ſhould not immediately ſucceed, what would become of the unbodied ſoul? But bleſſed be God, this great heart-eſtabliſhing truth is evidently revealed in ſcripture, Luke xxiii. 43. You have Chriſt's promiſe, John xiv. 3. "I will come and re-"ceive you to myſelf." O what a change will a few moments make upon your condition? Rouſe up, dying ſaint; when thy ſoul is come out a little further; when it ſhall ſtand like Abraham at its tent-door, the angels of God ſhall ſoon be with it: the ſouls of the elect are, as it were, put out to the angels to nurſe, and when they die, theſe angels carry them home again to their Father's houſe: if an angel were cauſed to fly ſwiftly to bring a ſaint the anſwer of his prayer, Dan. ix. 22. how much more will the angels come poſt from heaven to receive and transfer the praying ſoul itſelf?

Arg. 4. Farther, *It may much conduce to thy willingneſs to die, to conſider, that by death, God oftentimes hides his people out of the way of all temptations and troubles upon earth*, Rev. xiv. 13. "Write, "from henceforth, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord." It is God's uſual way, when ſome extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to ſet his people out of harm's way before-hand, Iſa. lvii. 1. "Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come." So Mic. vii. 2. when ſuch an evil time comes as is there deſcribed, "That they all ly in wait for blood, and every man hunts his brother "with a net:" God, by an act of favour, houſes his people before-hand. Doſt thou know what evil may be in the earth, which thou art ſo loth to leave? Thy God removes thee for thy great advantage; thou art diſbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor ſaints muſt ſtand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

It is obſerved that Methuſelah died the very year before the flood; Auguſtine, a little before the ſacking of Hippo; Pareus, juſt before the taking of Heidelburgh: Luther obſerves, that all the apoſtles died before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem: and Luther himſelf died before the wars broke out in Germany. It may be the Lord ſees thy tender heart cannot endure to ſee the miſery, or bear the temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy grave in peace; and yet wilt thou cry, O ſpare me a little longer!

Arg. 5. *If yet thy heart hang back, conſider the great advantage you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth;* and that, (1.) As to your communion with God: (2.) As to your communion with ſaints.

1. For your communion with God: the time of perfecting that is now come: thy ſoul ſhall ſhortly ſtand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it: here thy ſoul is remote from God, the beams of his glory ſtrike it but obliquely and feebly, but ſhortly it will be under the line, and there the ſun ſhall ſtand ſtill, as it did in Gibeon; there ſhall be no cloudings, nor declinings of it. O how ſhould this fill thy ſoul with deſires of being unclothed!

2. As for the enjoyment of ſaints, here indeed we have fellowſhip with them of the lower form; but that fellowſhip is ſo diſſweetened by remaining corruptions, that there is no ſatisfaction in it: as it is the greateſt plague that can befal an hypocrite to live in a pure church, ſo it is the greateſt vexation to the ſpirit of a ſaint, to live in a corrupt and diſordered church; but when death hath admitted you into that glorious aſſembly of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, you ſhall have the deſire of your hearts; here you cannot fully cloſe with another; yea, you cannot fully cloſe with your own ſouls. O what diſcords, jarrings, cenſurings are here? What perfect, bleſſed harmony there! In heaven each ſaint loves another as himſelf, they are altogether lovely. O my ſoul, haſte thee away from the lion's dens, from the mountains of Bether, from divided ſaints, to thoſe mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincenſe: thou art now going unto thine own people, as the apoſtle's phraſe imports, Cor. v. 8.

Arg. 6. If this will not do, *Conſider what heavy burdens death will eaſe thy ſhoulders of.*

In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened, (1.) With bodily diſtempers; how true do we find that of Theophraſtus. The ſoul pays a dear rent for the tenement it now lives in? But glorified bodies are clogged with no indiſpoſitions; death is the beſt phyſician; it will cure thee of all diſeaſes at once. (2.) With the indwelling of ſin; this makes us groan from the very bowels, Rom. vii. 24. "But he "that is dead, is free from ſin," Rom. vi. 7. Hath juſtification deſtroyed its *damning power*, and ſanctification its *reigning power?* So glorification deſtroys its very being and exiſtence. (3.) We groan under temptations here, but as ſoon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation: when once thou art got into heaven, thou mayeſt ſay, Now Satan, I am there where thou canſt not come; for as the damned in hell are *malo obformati*, ſo fixed in ſin and miſery, that their condition cannot be altered; ſo glorified ſaints are *bono confirmati*, ſo fixed in holineſs and glory, that they cannot be ſhaken. (4.) Here we groan under various troubles, and afflictions, but then the days of our mourning are ended. God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes. O then, let us haſte away, that we may be at reſt!

*Argument* 7. If ſtill thou linger, like Lot in Sodom, then, *laſtly, examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on earth.* Why art thou unwilling to die?

*Objection* 1. O I have many relations in the world, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

*Solution.* If thou art troubled about their bodies, and outward condition, why ſhould not that word ſatisfy thee, Jer. xlix. 11. Leave thy fatherleſs children to me, I will keep them "alive, and let thy "widows truſt in me." Luther, in his laſt will and teſtament, hath this expreſſion, 'Lord, thou haſt given me wife and children, I have 'nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father 'of the fatherleſs, and judge of widows, *Nutri, ſerva, doce;* nouriſh, 'keep, and teach them.' Or, art thou troubled for their ſouls? Thou canſt not convert them, if thou ſhouldſt live, and God can make thy prayers and counſels to live, and take place upon them when thou art dead.

*Objection* 2. I would fain live to do God more ſervice in the world.

*Solution.* Well, but if he have no more ſervice for thee to do here, why ſhouldſt thou not ſay with David, "If he have no delight to uſe "me any farther, here am I, let him do what ſeemeth him good." In this world thou haſt no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher ſervice and employment in heaven; and what thou wouldſt do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

*Objection* 3. I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a bride, completely adorned for the bridegroom.

*Solution.* Thy juſtification is complete already, though thy ſanctification be not ſo; and the way to make it ſo, is to die; for till then it will have its defects, and wants.

*Objection* 4. O but I want aſſurance; if I had that, I could die preſently.

*Solution.* Yea, there it ſticks, indeed; but then conſider, that an hearty willingneſs to leave all the world to be freed from ſin, and be with God, is the next way to that deſired aſſurance; no carnal perſon was ever willing to die upon this ground.

And thus I have finiſhed thoſe caſes which ſo nearly concern the people of God, in the ſeveral conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I ſhall next apply the whole.

## I. *Uſe, of Information.*

YOU have heard, that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a Chriſtian, in which the very ſoul and life of religion conſiſts, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence, then, I ſhall infer, to the conſternation of hypocrites, and formal profeſſors,

1. *That the pains and labours which many perſons have taken in religion, are but loſt labour and pains, to no purpoſe, ſuch as will never turn to account.*

Many great ſervices have been performed, many glorious works

are wrought by men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and ſhall never ſtand upon record, in order to an eternal acceptation, becauſe they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in thoſe duties: this is that fatal rock, upon which thouſands of vain profeſſors have ſplit themſelves eternally: they are curious about the externals of religion, but regardleſs of their hearts. O how many hours have ſome profeſſors ſpent in hearing, praying, reading, conferring! and yet, as to the main end of religion, as good they had ſat ſtill, and done nothing; for all this ſignifies nothing, the great work, I mean heart work, being all the while neglected. Tell me, thou vain profeſſor, when didſt thou ſhed a tear for the deadneſs, hardneſs, unbelief, or earthlineſs of thy heart? Thinkeſt thou ſuch an eaſy religion can ſave thee? If ſo, we may invert Chriſt's words, and ſay, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to "life, and many there be that go in thereat." Hear me, thou ſelf-deluding hypocrite, thou that haſt put off God with heartleſs duties, thou that haſt acted in religion as if thou hadſt been bleſſing an idol, that couldſt not ſearch and diſcover thy heart; thou that haſt offered to God but the ſkin of the ſacrifice, not the marrow, fat and inwards of it: how wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? How wilt thou hold up thy head before him, when he ſhall ſay, O thou diſſembling, falſe-hearted man! how couldſt thou profeſs religion? With what face couldſt thou ſo often tell me that thou lovedſt me, when thou knew all the while, in thine own conſcience, that thine heart was not with me? O tremble to think what a fearful judgment it is to be given over to a heedleſs, and careleſs heart; and then to have religious duties, inſtead of a rattle, to quiet and ſtill the conſcience!

2. Hence alſo infer for the *humiliation*, even of upright hearts, *That unleſs the people of God ſpend more time and pains about their hearts, than generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much ſervice, or be owners of much comfort in this world.*

I may ſay of that Chriſtian that is remiſs and careleſs in keeping his heart, as Jacob ſaid of Reuben, "Thou ſhalt not excel." It grieves me to ſee how many Chriſtians there are that go up and down dejected, and complaining, that live at a poor low rate, both of ſervice and comfort; and how can they expect it ſhould be otherwiſe, as long as they live at ſuch a careleſs rate? O how little of their time is ſpent in the cloſet in ſearching, humbling, and quickening their hearts?

You ſay your hearts are dead, and do you wonder they are ſo, as long as you keep them not with the fountain of life? If your bodies had been dieted as your ſouls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better hearts till you take more pains with them: *Qui fugit molam, fugit farinam;* he that will not have the *ſweat*, muſt not expect the *ſweet* of religion.

O Chriſtians! I fear your zeal and ſtrength have run in the wrong

channel; I fear moſt of us may take up the Church's complaint, Cant. i. 6. "They have made me the keeper of the vineyards, but "mine own vineyard have I not kept." Two things have eaten up the time and ſtrength of the profeſſors of this generation, and ſadly diverted them from heart-work: (1.) Fruitleſs controverſies ſtarted by Satan, I doubt not, to this very purpoſe, to take us off from practical godlineſs, to make us puzzle our heads when we ſhould be ſearching our hearts. O how little have we minded that of the apoſtle, Heb. xiii. 9. "It is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed "with grace, and not with meats;" i. e. with diſputes and controverſies about meats, "which have not profited them that have been "occupied therein."

O how much better is it to ſee men *live exactly*, than to hear them *diſpute ſubtlely!* Theſe unfruitful queſtions, how have they rent the churches, waſted time and ſpirits, and called Chriſtians off from their main buſineſs, from looking to their own vineyard? What think ye, ſirs? Had it not been better if the queſtions agitated among the people of God of late days had been ſuch as theſe? How ſhall a man diſcern the ſpecial, from the common operations of the Spirit? How may a ſoul diſcern its firſt declinings from God? How may a backſliding Chriſtian recover his firſt love? How may the heart be preſerved from unſeaſonable thoughts in duty? How may a boſom-ſin be diſcovered, and mortified, &c. would not this have tended more to the credit of religion and comfort of your ſouls? O it is time to repent and be aſhamed of this folly! When I read what Suarez, a Papiſt, ſaid, who wrote many tomes of diſputations, that he prized the time he ſet apart for the ſearching and examining of his heart, in reference to God, above all the time that ever he ſpent in other ſtudies: I am aſhamed to find the profeſſors of this age yet inſenſible of their folly. Shall the conſcience of a Suarez feel a relenting pang for ſtrength and time ſo ill employed, and ſhall not yours? This is it your miniſters long ſince warned you of; your ſpiritual nurſes were afraid of the rickets, when they ſaw our heads only to grow, and our hearts to wither. O when will God beat our ſwords into plow-ſhares! I mean, our diſputes and contentions into practical godlineſs. (2.) Another cauſe of neglecting our hearts hath been earthly incumbrances; the heads and hearts of many have been filled with ſuch a crowd and noiſe of worldly buſineſs, that they have ſadly and ſenſibly declined and withered in their zeal, love, and delight in God; in their heavenly, ſerious, and profitable way of converſing with men.

O how hath this wilderneſs entangled us! our diſcourſes and conferences, nay, our very prayers and duties have a tang of it: we have had ſo much work without doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the ſad complaint of an holy one*, 'O (ſaith he)

* Mr Strong.

‘ it is ſad to think how many precious opportunities I have loſt;
‘ how many ſweet motions and admonitions of the Spirit I have paſ-
‘ ſed over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to ſpeak in vain: in the
‘ ſecret illapſes of his Spirit the Lord hath called upon me, but my
‘ worldly thoughts did ſtill lodge within me, and there was no place
‘ within my heart for ſuch calls of God.” Surely there is a way of enjoying God, even in our worldly employments; God would never have put us upon them to our loſs; “ Enoch walked with God, and “ begat ſons and daughters,” Gen. v. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and ſeparate himſelf from the things of this life: and the angels that are employed by Chriſt in the things of this world, (for the ſpirit of the living creatures is in the wheels) they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a twofold *ubi* at one time; yet they loſe nothing of the beatifical viſion all the time of their adminiſtration: for Matth. xviii. 10. “ Their angels (even whilſt they are employed for “ them) behold the face of their Father which is in heaven.” We need not loſe our viſions by our employments, if the fault were not our own. Alas! that ever Chriſtians, who ſtand at the door of eternity, and have more work upon their hands than this poor moment of interpoſing time is ſufficient for, ſhould yet be filling both their heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence I infer, for the *awakening* of all, *That if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Chriſtian, then there are but few real Chriſtians in the world.*

Indeed if every one that hath learned the dialect of Chriſtianity, and can talk like a ſaint: if every one that hath gifts and parts, and by the common aſſiſting preſence of the Spirit can preach, pray, or diſcourſe like a Chriſtian; in a word, if ſuch as aſſociate themſelves with the people of God, and delight in ordinances, may paſs for Chriſtians, the number then is great.

But, alas! to what a ſmall number will they ſhrink, if you judge them by this rule! how few are there that make conſcience of keeping their hearts, watching their thoughts, judging their ends, *&c.* O there be but few cloſet men among profeſſors! It is far eaſier for men to be reconciled to any duties in religion than to theſe: The profane part of the world will not ſo much as touch with the outſide of religious duties, much leſs with this; and for the hypocrite, though he be polite and curious about thoſe externals, yet you can never perſuade him to this inward work, this difficult work, to which there is no inducement by human applauſe; this work, that would quickly diſcover what the hypocrite cares not to know; ſo that by a general conſent, this heart-work is left to the hands of a few ſecret ones, and I tremble to think in how few hands it is.

II. *Uſe, for Exhortation.*

*If the keeping of the heart be ſo important a buſineſs; if ſuch choice advantages accrue to you thereby; if ſo many dear and precious intereſts be*

*wrapt up in it, then let me call upon the people of God every where to fall cloſe to this work.*

O ſtudy your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts! away with fruitleſs controverſies, and all idle queſtions; away with empty names and vain ſhews; away with unprofitable diſcourſe and bold cenſures of others; turn in upon yourſelves; get into your cloſets, and now reſolve to dwell there. You have been ſtrangers to this work too long; you have kept others vineyards too long; you have trifled about the borders of religion too long; this world hath detained you from your great work too long; will you now reſolve to look better to your hearts? Will you haſte and come out of the crowds of buſineſs, and clamours of the world, and retire yourſelves more than you have done? O that this day you would reſolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I ſhould prevail with thee: All that I beg for is but this, that thou wouldſt ſtep aſide a little oftner to talk with God, and thine own heart; that thou wouldſt not ſuffer every trifle to divert thee; that thou wouldſt keep a more true and faithful account of thy thoughts and affections; that thou wouldſt but ſeriouſly demand of this thy own heart, at leaſt every evening, O my heart, where haſt thou been to-day? Whither haſt thou made a road to-day? If all that hath been ſaid by way of inducement be not enough, I have yet more motives to offer you. And the firſt is this:

1. Motive. *The ſtudying, obſerving, and diligent keeping of your own hearts, will marvellouſly help your underſtanding in the deep myſteries of religion.*

An honeſt well-experienced heart, is a ſingular help to a weak head; ſuch a heart will ſerve you inſtead of a *commentary* upon a great part of the ſcriptures: By this means you ſhall far better underſtand the things of God, than the learned rabbies and profound doctors (if graceleſs and unexperienced) ever did; you ſhall not only have a more clear, but a more ſweet perception and guſt of them: A man may diſcourſe orthodoxly and profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, the troubles and comforts of conſcience, the ſweetneſs of communion with God, that never felt the efficacy and ſweet impreſſions of theſe things upon his own ſpirit: but O how dark and dry are theſe notions, compared with his upon whoſe heart they have been acted! When ſuch a man reads David's Pſalms, or Paul's epiſtles, there he finds his own objections made and anſwered. O, ſaith he, theſe holy men ſpeak my very heart: Their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember Chryſoſtom, ſpeaking to his people of Antioch about ſome choice experiences, uſed this expreſſion: *Sciunt initiati quid dico:* Thoſe that are initiated, know what I ſay: Experience is the beſt ſchoolmaſter. O then, ſtudy your hearts, keep your hearts!

2 Motive. *The ſtudy and obſervation of your own hearts will antidote you againſt the dangerous and infecting errors of the times and places you live in.*

For what think you is the reaſon that ſo many profeſſors in England have departed from the faith, giving heed to fables; that ſo many thouſands have been led away by the error of the wicked; that Jeſuits and Quakers, who have ſown corrupt doctrine, have had ſuch plentiful harveſts among us, but becauſe they have met with a company of empty notional profeſſors, that never knew what belongs to practical godlineſs, and the ſtudy of their own hearts.

If profeſſors did but give diligence to ſtudy, ſearch and watch their own hearts, they would have that ἰδιον στηριγμον, that ſteadfaſtneſs of their own, that Peter ſpeaks of, 1 Pet. iii. 17. and this would ballaſt and ſettle them, Heb. xiii. 9. Suppoſe a ſubtle Papiſt ſhould talk to ſuch of the dignity and merit of good works; could he ever work the perſuaſion of it into that heart that is conſcious to itſelf of ſo much darkneſs, deadneſs, diſtraction, and unbelief, attending its beſt duties? It is a good rule, *Non eſt diſputandum de guſtu:* There is no diſputing againſt taſte. What a man hath felt and taſted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

3 Motive. *Your care and diligence in keeping your hearts will prove one of the beſt evidences of your ſincerity.*

I know no external act of religion that differences the ſound from the unſound profeſſor: It is wonderful to conſider how far hypocrites go in all external duties; how plauſibly they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the obſervation of the world.

But then, they take no heed to their hearts; they are not in ſecret what they appear to be in public: And before this trial no hypocrite can ſtand. It is confeſſed they may in a fit, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry out of the wickedneſs of their hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to theſe extorted complaints. In our law, no credit is to be given to the teſtimony of one upon the rack, becauſe it may be ſuppoſed that the extremity of the torture may make him ſay any thing to be eaſed. But if ſelf-jealouſy, care, and watchfulneſs, be the daily workings and frames of thy heart, it ſtrongly argues the ſincerity of it: For what but the ſenſe of a divine eye; what but the real hatred of ſin as ſin, could put thee upon thoſe ſecret duties, which lie out of the obſervation of all creatures?

If then it be a deſirable thing in thine eyes to have a fair teſtimony of thine integrity, and to know of a truth, that thou feareſt God; then ſtudy thine heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

4 Motive. *How fruitful, ſweet, and comfortable would all ordinances and duties be to us, if our hearts were better kept?*

O what precious communion might you have with God every time you approach him, if your hearts were but in frame! You might then ſay with David, Pſal. civ. 35. "My meditation of him ſhall be "ſweet." That which loſes all our comforts in ordinances and more ſecret duties, is the indiſpoſedneſs of the heart: A Chriſtian whoſe heart is in a good frame, gets the ſtart of all others that come with

him in that duty: They ſtrive hard to get up their hearts to God, now trying this argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and affect them, and ſometimes go away as bad as they came: Sometimes the duty is almoſt ended before their hearts begin to ſtir or feel any warmth, quickening, or power from it: But all this while the prepared heart is at its work; this is he that ordinarily gets the firſt ſight of Chriſt in a ſermon, the firſt ſeal from Chriſt in a ſacrament, the firſt kiſs from Chriſt in ſecret prayer. I tell you, and tell you but what I have felt, that prayers and ſermons would appear to you other manner of things than they do, did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them; you would not go away dejected and drooping. O this hath been a loſt duty to me! if you had not loſt your hearts, it had not been ſo. If then the comfort of ordinances be ſweet, look to your hearts, keep your hearts.

5 Motive. *Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a fountain of matter to you in prayer.*

A man that is diligent in heart-work, and knows the ſtate of his own ſoul, will have a fountain-fulneſs of matter to ſupply him richly in all his addreſſes to God; his tongue ſhall not faulter and make pauſe for want of matter; Pſal. xlv. 1. "My heart is inditing a good "matter:" Or, as Montanus renders the original, my heart is boiling up good matter, like a living ſpring, that is ſtill bubbling up freſh water; and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer: Others muſt pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loſs, when they have done all: but if thou have kept, and faithfully ſtudied thine own heart, it will be with thee (as Job ſpeaks in another caſe) like bottles full of new wine that want vent, which are ready to burſt: As holy matter flows plentifully, ſo more feelingly and ſweetly from ſuch a heart. When a heart-experienced Chriſtian is mourning before God over ſome ſpecial heart-corruption, wreſtling with God for the ſupply of ſome ſpecial inward want, he ſpeaks not as other men do that have learned to pray by rote; their confeſſions and petitions are ſqueezed out; his drop freely, like pure honey from the comb: It is a happineſs then to be with or near ſuch a Chriſtian. I remember Bernard, having given rules to prepare the heart for prayer, concludes them thus, *Et cum talis fueris, momento mei;* and (ſaith he) When thy heart is in this frame, then remember me.

6 Motive. *By this the decayed power of religion will be recovered again among profeſſors, which is the moſt deſirable ſtate in this world.*

O that I might live to ſee that day, when profeſſors ſhall not walk in a vain ſhew, when they ſhall pleaſe themſelves no more with a name to live, being ſpiritually dead! When they ſhall be no more (as many of them now are) a company of frothy, vain, and unſerious perſons, but the majeſtic beams of holineſs ſhining from their heavenly and ſerious converſation, ſhall awe the world, and command reverence from all that are about them; when they ſhall warm the hearts of

thoſe that come nigh them, ſo that men ſhall ſay, God is in theſe men of a truth.

Well, ſuch a time may again be expected, according to that promiſe, Iſa. lx. 21. "The people ſhall be all righteous." But till we purſue cloſer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to ſee thoſe bleſſed days; I cannot expect better times till God gives better hearts. Doth it not grieve you to ſee what a ſcorn religion is made in the world? what objects of contempt and ſcorn the profeſſors of it are made in the world?

Profeſſors, would you recover your credit? Would you again obtain an honourable teſtimony in the conſciences of your very enemies? Then keep your hearts, watch your hearts: it is the looſeneſs, frothineſs, and earthlineſs of your hearts that have made your lives ſo; and theſe have brought you under the contempt of the world; you firſt loſt your ſights of God, and communion with him, then your heavenly and ſerious deportment among men, and by that your intereſt in their conſciences: O then, for the credit of religion, for the honour of your profeſſion keep your hearts!

7 Motive. *By diligence in keeping your hearts, we ſhould prevent, and remove the fatal ſcandals and ſtumbling-blocks out of the way of the world.*

"Woe to the world (ſaith Chriſt) becauſe of offences!" Matth. xviii. 7. Doth not ſhame cover your faces? Do not your hearts bleed within you, to hear of the ſcandalous miſcarriages of many looſe profeſſors? Could you not, like Shem and Japhet, go backward with a garment to cover the ſhame of many profeſſors? How is that worthy name blaſphemed! Jam. ii. 7. 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. the hearts of the righteous ſaddened, Pſal. xxv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 20. by this the world is fearfully prejudiced againſt Chriſt and religion, the bonds of death made faſt upon their ſouls; thoſe that have a general love and liking to the ways of God, ſtartled and quite driven back, and thus ſoul-blood is ſhed: woe to the world!

Yea, how are the conſciences of fallen profeſſors plunged, and even overwhelmed in the deeps of trouble? God inwardly excommunicating their ſouls from all comfortable fellowſhip with himſelf, and the joys of his ſalvation; infinite are the miſchiefs that come by the ſcandalous lives of profeſſors.

And what is the true cauſe and reaſon of all this, but the neglecting of their hearts? Were our hearts better kept, all this would be prevented. Had David kept his heart, he had not broken his bones: a negligent and careleſs heart muſt of neceſſity produce a diſorderly and ſcandalous life. I thank God for the freedom and faithfulneſs of a * reverend brother, in ſhewing profeſſors their manifold miſcarriages; and from my heart do wiſh, that when their wounds have been thoroughly ſearched by that probe, God would be pleaſed to heal them by this plaiſter. O profeſſors! if ever you will keep

* Goſpel-Glaſs.

religion ſweet; if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the world, keep your hearts; either keep your hearts, or loſe your credit; keep your hearts, or loſe your comforts; keep your hearts leſt ye ſhed ſoul-blood. What words can expreſs the deep concernments, the wonderful conſequences of this work! Every thing puts a neceſſity, a ſolemnity, a beauty upon it.

8 Motive. *An heart well kept will fit you for any condition God caſts you into, or any ſervice he hath to uſe you in.*

He that hath learnt how to keep his heart lowly, is fit for proſperity: and he that knows how to uſe and apply it to ſcripture-promiſes and ſupports, is fit to paſs through any adverſity: He that can deny the pride and ſelfiſhneſs of his heart, is fit to be employed in any ſervice for God. Such a man was Paul, he did not only ſpend his time in preaching to others, in keeping others vineyards, but he looked to himſelf, kept his own vineyard; 1 Cor. ix. 27. "Leſt "when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away." And what an eminent inſtrument was he for God? He could turn his hand to any work; he could dexterouſly manage both an adverſe and proſperous condition: "I know how to abound, and how to ſuf-"fer want. Let the people deify him, it moves him not, unleſs to "indignation. Let them ſtone him, he can bear it; If a man purge "himſelf from theſe (ſaith he, 2 Tim. ii. 21.) he ſhall be a veſſel "unto honour, ſanctified, and meet for the maſter's houſe, and pre-"pared unto every good work."

Firſt the heart muſt be purged, and then it is prepared for any ſervice of God. When the heart of Iſaiah was purified, which was the thing ſignified by the touching of his lips with a coal from the altar, Iſa. vi. 7. then he was fit for God's work: "Here am I, ſend "me," ver. 8. A man that hath not learned to keep his heart, put him upon any ſervice for God, and if it be attended with honour, it ſhall ſwell up and over-top his ſpirit; if with ſuffering, it will exanimate and ſink him.

Jeſus Chriſt had an inſtrumental fitneſs for his Father's work above all the ſervants that ever God employed: he was zealous in public work for God; ſo zealous, that ſometimes he forgot to eat bread, yea, that his friends thought he had been beſides himſelf: but yet he ſo carried on his public work, as not to forget his own private communion with God: and therefore you read, Matth. xiii. 23. that when he had been labouring all day, yet, after that he went up to a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone. O let the keepers of the vineyards look to their own vineyard: We ſhall never be ſo inſtrumental to the good of others, as when we are moſt diligent about our own ſouls.

9 Motive. *If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of ſaints be thereby ſweetened.*

How goodly then would be thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Iſrael! Then it is propheſied of the Jews, Zech. viii. 23.

" Men would ſay, we will go with you; for we have heard that God " is among you." It is the fellowſhip your ſouls have with the Father, and with the Son, that draws out the deſires of others after fellowſhip with you, 1 John i. 3. I tell you, if ſaints would be perſuaded to take more pains, and ſpend more time about their hearts, there would quickly be ſuch a divine luſtre upon the face of their converſations, that men would account it no ſmall privilege to be with or near them.

It is the pride, paſſion, and earthlineſs of our hearts that have ſpoiled Chriſtian fellowſhip. Whence is it, that when Chriſtians meet, they are often jarring and contending? but only from their unmortified paſſions: whence are their uncharitable cenſures of their brethren? but only from ſelf-ignorance: Why are they ſo rigid and unmerciful towards thoſe that are fallen? but becauſe they conſider not themſelves, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Gal. vi. 1. Why is their diſcourſe ſo frothy and unprofitable when they meet? is not this from the earthlineſs and vanity of their hearts?

My brethren, theſe be the things that have ſpoiled Chriſtian fellowſhip, and made it become a dry and ſapleſs thing; ſo that many Chriſtians are even weary of it, and are ready to ſay with the prophet, Jer. ix. 2. " O that I had a cottage in the wilderneſs, &c. that I " might leave my people, and go from them!" And with David, Pſalm cxx. 6. " My ſoul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace." This hath made them long for the grave that they might go from them that are not their own people, to them that are their own people, as the original of that text imports, 2 Cor. v. 8.

But now if profeſſors would ſtudy their own hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the beauty and glory of communion again reſtored: they would divide no more, contend no more, cenſure raſhly no more; when their hearts are in tune, their tongues will not jar; how charitable, pitiful, and tender will they be of one another, when every one is daily humbled under the evils of his own heart. Lord, haſten thoſe much-deſired days, and bleſs theſe counſels in order to them!

10 Motive. Laſtly, *By this the comforts of the Spirit, and precious influence of all ordinances would be fixed, and much longer preſerved in your ſouls than now they are.*

Ah! what would I give, that my ſoul might be preſerved in that frame I ſometimes find it in after an ordinance? *Aliquando intromittis me, Domine, in affectum multum inuſitatum, introrſus ad quam neſcio dulcedinem*, &c. Sometimes, O Lord, (ſaith one of the Fathers ſweetly) thou admitteſt me into the moſt inward, unuſual, and ſweet delights, to I-know-not-what ſweetneſs, which, were it perfected in me, I know not what it would be, or rather, what it would not be. But alas! the heart grows careleſs again, and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire, to its native coldneſs. Could you but keep thoſe things for ever in your hearts, what Chriſtians would you be? what

lives would you live? and how is it that these things remain no longer with us? Doubtless it is because we suffer our hearts to take cold again; we should be as careful after an ordinance or duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of a hot bath, or great sweat, is of going out into the chill air. We have our hot and cold fits by turns; and what is the reason but our unskilfulness and carelessness in keeping the heart?

It is a thousand pities, that the ordinances of God, as to their quickening and comforting effects, should be like those human ordinances the apostle speaks of, that perish in the using O then, let me say to you, as Job xv. 11. "Do the consolations of God seem small to you?" Look over these ten special benefits; weigh them in a just balance; are they small matters? Is it a small matter to have thy weak understanding assisted? Thy endangered soul antidoted, thy sincerity cleared, thy communion with God sweetened, thy sails filled in prayer? Is it a small thing to have the decayed power of Godliness again recovered, all fatal scandals removed, an instrumental fitness to serve Christ obtained, the communion of saints restored to its primitive glory, and the influences of ordinances abiding in the souls of saints? If these be no common blessings, no small benefits, then, surely, it is a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

### *The* III. *Use for Direction.*

The next use shall be for direction to some special means for the keeping of the heart. And here, besides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty *at the beginning of this discourse*, to which I refer the reader, and all those directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular cases and seasons; I shall farther add several other general means of excellent use to this end. And the first is this:

1 Mean. *Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been persuaded? Then furnish your hearts richly with the word of God, which is their best preservation against sin.*

Keep the word, and the word will keep you: as the first receiving of the word regenerated your hearts, so the keeping of the word within you will preserve your hearts: Col. iii. 16. "Let the word "of Christ dwell richly in you:" let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwell richly or plentifully; in all that is of it, in its commands, promises, threats; in all that is in you, in your understanding, memories, consciences, affections, and then it will preserve your hearts; Psalm cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in "mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." It is the slipperiness of our hearts in reference to the word, that causes so many slips in our lives. Conscience cannot be urged or awed with forgotten truths; but keep it in the heart, and it will keep both heart and life upright; Psalm xxxvii. 31. "The law of his God is in his heart; "none of his steps shall slide;" or if he do, the word will recover

the ſtraying heart again; Matth. xxvi. 57. "Then Peter remem-
" bered the word of Jeſus, and wept bitterly." We never loſe our hearts, till they have firſt loſt the efficacious and powerful impreſſion of the word.

2 Mean. *Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Thoſe that put a ſtock into the hands of unfaithful or ſuſpicious ſervants, will be ſure to make ſhort reckonings with them; "The
" heart is deceitful, above all things, and deſperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. O it is as neceſſary as ſweet, that we and our reins, that is, we and our ſecret thoughts, ſhould confer together every night, Pſalm xvi. 7. We ſhould call our hearts to account every evening, and ſay, O my heart! Where haſt thou been to day? Where have thy thoughts been wandering to day? What an account canſt thou give of them? O naughty heart! vain heart! couldſt thou not abide by the fountain of delights? Is there better entertainment with the creature than with God? The oftner the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandering, the leſs it will wander: If every vain thought were retracted with a ſigh, every excurſion of the heart from God with a ſevere check, it would not dare ſo boldly and frequently to digreſs and ſtep aſide; thoſe actions which are committed with reluctancy, are not committed with frequency.

3 Mean. *He that will keep his heart, muſt take heed of plunging himſelf into ſuch a multiplicity of earthly buſineſs, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main buſineſs.*

It cannot be imagined he ſhould keep his heart with God that hath loſt himſelf in a wood of earthly buſineſs: Take heed you do not pinch your ſouls, by gratifying the immoderate deſires of your fleſh. I wiſh many Chriſtians could truly ſay what an * heathen once did! 'I do not give, but only lend myſelf to buſineſs.' It is ſaid Germanicus reigned in the hearts of the Romans; Tiberius only in their provinces. Though the world be in your hands, let it not juſtle Chriſt out of your hearts.

Take heed, Chriſtian, leſt thy ſhop ſteal away thy heart from thy cloſet; God never intended earthly employments for a ſtop, but rather for a ſtep to heavenly ones. O let not Ariſtippus the heathen, ariſe in judgment againſt thee, who ſaid, 'He would rather neglect 'his means, than his mind; his farm, than his ſoul.' If thy ſhip be overloaden, thou muſt caſt ſome overboard: More buſineſs than thou canſt well manage, is like more meat than thou canſt well digeſt, which will quickly make a ſickly ſoul.

4 Mean. *He that means to keep his heart, muſt carefully obſerve its firſt declinings from God, and ſtop it there.*

He that will find his houſe in good repair, muſt ſtop every chink as ſoon as diſcovered; and he that will keep his heart, muſt not let

* Seneca.

a vain thought be long neglected; the ſerpent of heart-apoſtaſy is beſt killed in the egg of a ſmall remiſſion of care. Oh! if many poor decayed Chriſtians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that ſad paſs they now are in? We may ſay of heart-neglects, as the apoſtle doth of vain babblings; that they increaſe to more and more ungodlineſs. *Nemo repente fit turpiſſimus;* little ſins neglected, will quickly become great and maſterleſs: The greateſt *crocodile* once lay in an egg; the greateſt *oak* was once but an acorn. The firing of a ſmall train of powder may blow up all, by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!

5 Mean. *Take heed of loſing the livelineſs and ſweetneſs of your communion with God, leſt thereby your hearts be looſed off from God.*

The heart is an hungry and reſtleſs thing; it will have ſomething to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for ſomething among the creatures, and there it often loſes itſelf, as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the heart to a conſtancy and evenneſs in walking with God, than the ſweetneſs which it taſtes therein: As the Gauls, when once they taſted the ſweet wine of Italy, could never be ſatisfied till they conquered the country where it grew.

It is true, conſcience of duty may keep the heart from neglecting it; but when there is no higher motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with diſtractions; that which we delight in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the motions of the heart to earthly things, where the wheels being oiled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of trigging; the motions of the heart upwards would be as free, if its delight in heavenly things were as great.

6 Mean. *Habituate thy heart to ſpiritual meditations, if thou wouldſt have it free from thoſe burdenſome diverſions.*

By this mean you will get a facility and dexterity in heart-work: It is pity thoſe ſmaller portions of our time betwixt ſolemn duties ſhould lie upon our hands, and be rendered uſeleſs to us. O learn to ſave, and be good huſbands upon your thoughts. To this purpoſe a neat author * ſpeaks; 'Theſe parentheſes, which happen to come 'between the more ſolemn paſſages (whether buſineſs or recreations) 'of human life, are wont to be loſt by moſt men for want of a due 'value for them, and even by good men, for want of ſkill to pre'ſerve them; for though they do not properly deſpiſe them, yet 'they neglect, or loſe them, for want of knowing how to reſcue 'them, or what to do with them: But although grains of ſand and 'aſhes be, apart, but of a deſpicable ſmallneſs, and liable to be ſcat'tered and blown away, yet the ſkilful artificer, by a vehement fire, 'brings numbers of thoſe to afford him that noble ſubſtance, glaſs, 'by whoſe help we may both ſee ourſelves, and our blemiſhes live-

* Boyle's occaſional reflect. p. 9. 10.

‘ ly repreſented (as in looking-glaſſes) and diſcern celeſtial objects (as
‘ with the teleſcopes) and with the ſun beams kindle diſpoſed mate-
‘ rials (as with burning glaſſes:) So when theſe little fragments, or
‘ parcels of time, which if not carefully looked to, would be diſ-
‘ ſipated and loſt, come to be managed by a ſkilful contemplator, and
‘ to be improved by the celeſtial fire of devotion, they may be ſo
‘ ordered as to afford us both looking-glaſſes to dreſs our ſouls by,
‘ and proſpectives to diſcover heavenly wonders and incentives to in-
‘ flame our hearts with zeal:’ Thus far he.

Something of that nature I have under hand, for a public benefit, if God give life to finiſh, and opportunity to produce it: Certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the heart with God.

IV. *Uſe of Conſolation.*

I ſhall now cloſe the whole with a word or two of conſolation to all diligent and ſerious Chriſtians, that faithfully and cloſely ply heart-work; that are groaning and weeping in ſecret over the hardneſs, pride, earthlineſs, and vanity of their hearts; that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulneſs and falſeneſs of them, whilſt other vain profeſſors eyes are abroad, their time and ſtrength eaten up by fruitleſs diſputes and earthly employments, or, at beſt, by a cold and formal performance of ſome heartleſs and empty duties. Poor Chriſtian! I have three things to offer thee, in order to thy ſupport and comfort; and, doubtleſs, either of them alone, mixed with faith, is ſufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou haſt with thine own heart.

1 Comfort. *This argues thy heart to be upright and honeſt, whatever thy gifts and abilities are.*

It is uprightneſs of heart will comfort thee upon a death-bed; 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. “Then he turned his face to the wall, and pray-
“ ed to the Lord, ſaying, remember now, O Lord, how I have walk-
“ ed before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart,” &c.

I am really of his mind, who ſaid, *ſi mihi daretur optio, eligerim Chriſtiani ruſtici ſordidiſſimum & maxime agreſte opus præ omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Cæſaris;* might I have my wiſh, I would prefer the moſt deſpicable and ſordid work of a ruſtic Chriſtian, before all the victories and triumphs of Alexander or Cæſar; yea, let me add, before all the elaborated duties and excellent gifts of vain profeſſors; before the tongues of men and angels. It will ſignify more to my comfort, to ſpend one ſolitary hour in mourning before the Lord over heart-corruption, than many hours in a ſeeming zealous, but really dead performance of common duties with the greateſt enlargements and richeſt embelliſhments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Chriſt diſtinguiſhes the formal and ſerious Chriſtian, Matth. vi. 5. The one is for the ſtreet and ſynagogue, for the obſervation and applauſe of men, but the other is a cloſet-man, he drives on a home-trade, a heart-trade. Never be troubled

then for the want of thoſe things that a man may have and be eternally damned; but rather bleſs God for that which none but the favourites and darlings of heaven have. Many a one is now in hell that had a better head than thine; and many a one now in heaven that complained of as bad a heart as thine.

2 Comfort. *Know further for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under ſo many heart-troubles and burdens if he intended not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord! why is it thus? Why go I mourning all the day, having ſorrow in my heart? Thus long have I been exerciſed with hardneſs of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart. Many years have I been praying and ſtriving againſt vain thoughts, yet am ſtill infeſted and perplexed with them. O when ſhall I get a better heart! I have been in travail, and brought forth but wind; I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen. I have brought this heart many times to prayers, ſermons and ſacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and ſtill my ſore runneth, and ceaſeth not.

Penſive ſoul! Let this comfort thee; thy God deſigns thy benefit, even by theſe occaſions of thy ſad complaints. For (1.) Hereby he would let thee ſee what thy heart by nature is and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholden to free grace. He leaves thee under theſe exerciſes of ſpirit, that thou mayſt lie, as with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of glory ſhould take ſo vile a creature into his boſom. Thy baſe heart, if it be good for nothing elſe, yet ſerves to commend and ſet off the unſearchable riches of free grace. (2.) This ſerves to beat thee off continually from reſting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteouſneſs or excellency. The corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee ſenſibly to feel that the bed is too ſhort, and the covering too narrow. Were it not for thoſe reflections thou haſt after duties, upon the dulneſs and diſtractions of thine heart in them; how apt wouldſt thou be to fall in love with, and admire thine own performances and enlargements? For if notwithſtanding theſe, thou haſt much to do with the pride of thy heart, how much more; if ſuch humbling and ſelf-abaſing conſiderations were wanting. And, laſtly, this tends to make thee the more compaſſionate and tender towards others: Perhaps thou wouldſt have little pity for the diſtreſſes and ſoul-troubles of others, if thou hadſt leſs experience of thine own.

3 Comfort. *To conclude; God will ſhortly put a bleſſed end to all theſe troubles, cares and watchings.*

The time is coming, when thy heart ſhall be as thou wouldſt have it; when thou ſhalt be diſcharged of all theſe cares, fears, and ſorrows, and never cry out, O my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more! When all darkneſs ſhall be baniſhed from thine underſtanding; and thou ſhalt clearly diſcover all truths in God, that cryſtal ocean of truth: When all vanity ſhall be purged perfect-

ly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlaſtingly, raviſhingly, and delightfully entertained and exerciſed upon that ſupreme goodneſs, and infinite excellency of God, from whom they ſhall never ſtart any more like a broken bow. And as for thy pride, paſſion, earthlineſs, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it ſhall be ſaid of them, as of the Egyptians to Iſreal, "Stand ſtill, and ſee the "ſalvation of God." Theſe corruptions thou ſeeſt to day, henceforth thou ſhalt ſee them no more for ever! when thou ſhalt lay down thy weapons of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the armour of light, not to fight, but triumph in.

Lord! when ſhall this bleſſed day come? How long! how long! holy and true? My ſoul waiteth for thee! Come, my Beloved! and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. *Amen.*

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THE

# *Touchſtone of Sincerity:*

OR,

## THE SIGNS OF GRACE, AND SYMPTOMS OF HYPOCRISY.

Opened in a practical Treatiſe upon Revelation iii. 17, 18.

### *The Epiſtle to the Reader.*

*Reader,*

AMONG the difficulties and ſeverities of true religion, the faithful ſearching, and diligent keeping of our hearts are found in the firſt and higheſt rank of difficulties: Theſe two take up the main work of a Chriſtian betwixt them, *Hic labor, hoc opus eſt.* I had hopes that theſe *eſſays* for the *ſearching of the heart*, might much ſooner have followed my former for *keeping the heart.** But providence hath reſerved it for the fitteſt ſeaſon.

It comes to thy hand, Reader, in a day of ſtraits and fears, a dark and gloomy ſeaſon; when the nations about us are made drunk with their own blood, and filled with the wine of aſtoniſhment? in a day when the cup is ready to paſs unto us, and a ſtorm ſeems to be riſing in the fears of many, and threatening the *proteſtant* intereſt in theſe reformed nations. Some men, very conſiderable for piety and learn-

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* A Saint Indeed.

ing, from that ſcripture, Rev. xiii. 3. "The deadly wound," (viz. That given the beaſt by the reformation) *was healed*, have concluded, that Popery will once more over-run the reformed nations: And one of great renown in all the churches of Chriſt, foretelling this furious, but ſhort ſtorm, comforts the people of God with this, That it is like to fall heavieſt upon the worſhippers in the *outward court*, namely the formal profeſſors of the times.

O how much is every man now concerned to have his eſtate and condition well cleared, and to give all diligence to make his calling and election ſure!

It ſhould both amaze and grieve a pious mind, to ſee how ſome ingenious perſons can ſit with unwearied patience and pleaſure, racking their brains upon ſome dry *ſchool problem*, or ſome nice *mathematical point*; whilſt no reaſons or perſuaſions can prevail with them to ſpend one ſerious hour in the ſearch and ſtudy of their own hearts!

It was the ſaying of the great Cicero, *Libenter omnibus omnes opes conceſſerim, ut mihi liceat, vi nulla interpellante, iſto modo literis vivere:* I would give all the wealth in the world that I might wholly live in my ſtudies, and have nothing to hinder me. What a brave offer had that been, if heaven, and the clearing of a title to it, had been the ſubject-matter of thoſe ſtudies! *Crede mihi, extingui dulce eſſet, mathematicarum artium ſtudio*, ſaith another; i. e. Believe me, it were a ſweet death to die in the ſtudy of the *mathematical arts:* And I ſhould be apt to believe it too, did I not know that eternal judgment immediately follows death; and that they who ſtand at the door of eternity have higher matters to mind than *mathematical niceties*. To diſcern the harmonies and proportions in nature is pleaſant; but, to diſcern the harmony and proportion of the *ſigns* of grace laid down in the word, with the works of grace wrought in our *ſouls*, is a far more pleaſant and neceſſary employment; and, to be extinguiſhed in ſuch a work as this, were a lovely death indeed: "Bleſſed is that "ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing!"

My friends, a day of trouble is near, a dying hour approacheth us; and when our eye-ſtrings and heart-ſtrings are breaking; when we are taking the laſt graſp of Chriſt, and the promiſes, you will then know to what purpoſe thoſe hours ſpent in ſuch work as this were. Search yourſelves, yea, ſearch yourſelves before the decree bring forth, as that text may be read, Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Enter into "thy chamber and ſhut thy door;" 'ſit cloſe to this employment 'thou art here directed to; and however times ſhall govern, whether 'it be fair or foul weather abroad, thou ſhalt never repent ſuch an 'expence of thy time.' *Naſquam requiem inveni, niſi in libro, & clauſtro*, ſaid a devout ſoul once; I am never better than when I am at my book, or on my knees.

This may ſeem but a dull, melancholy life to the briſk and airy ſpirits of theſe times; but let us be content with it as it is, and leave them (if we cannot have their company) to their ſportiveneſs and

frolics, never once grudging them in their ſhort and dear-bought pleaſures. Aſſurance, That ſin is pardoned, and Chriſt is ours, with the unſpeakable joys that are inſeparably connected therewith, is that "white ſtone, and new name, which none knows but he that receives it;" for no words can poſſibly ſignify to another what that ſoul taſtes and feels in ſuch an hour as that is.

And be not diſcouraged at the difficulty of obtaining it: This *white ſtone* is no *philoſopher's ſtone*, which no man could ever ſay he had in his own hand; for many a Chriſtian hath really found it in waiting upon the Lord by prayer, and diligently ſearching the ſcriptures and his own heart.

Reader, the time will come when they that ſcoff at the ſerious diligence of the ſaints, and break many a pleaſant jeſt upon the moſt ſolemn and awful things in religion, will tremble when they ſhall hear the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh!" and ſee the lamps of all vain and formal profeſſors expire, and none admitted into the marriage but ſuch whoſe lamps are furniſhed with oil; i. e. ſuch whoſe profeſſions and duties are enlivened and maintained by vital ſprings and principles of real grace within them.

It is a very remarkable ſtory that Melchior Adams records in the life of Gobelinus; that a little before his time there was a play ſet forth at Iſenach in Germany, of the *wiſe* and *fooliſh virgins*, wherein the Virgin Mary was one of the five ſaints that repreſented the wiſe virgins, was brought in with the reſt, telling the *fooliſh virgins* that cried to her for oil, that it was too late: and then others repreſenting the *fooliſh virgins*, fell a weeping, and making moſt bitter lamentations.

Hereat prince Frederic (who was one of the ſpectators) greatly amazed, cried out, *Quid eſt fides noſtra Chriſtiana, ſi neque Maria, neque alia Sancta exorari poteſt!* &c. What is our faith worth, and to what purpoſe are all our good works, if neither Mary nor any other ſaint can help us! And ſuch was his conſternation, that it threw him into a ſore and violent diſeaſe which ended in an apoplexy, whereof he died about four days after.

If the repreſentation of theſe things in a play ended the life of ſo great a man ſo tragically; O think with thyſelf, Reader, what will the effects of the Lord's real appearance in the clouds of heaven, and the mourning and wailing of the tribes of the earth in that day be! Think I ſay, and think again and again, what the diſmal effects of ſuch a ſight and ſound will be upon all that neglect ſerious preparation themſelves, and ſcoff at them that do prepare to meet the Lord!

The deſign of this manual is to bring every man's gold to the touch-ſtone and fire; I mean every man's grace to the trial of the word; that thereby we may know what we are, what we have, and what we muſt expect and truſt to at the Lord's coming. I pretend not to any gift of *diſcerning ſpirits*; ſuch an extraordinary gift there once was in the church, and very neceſſary for thoſe times (wherein Satan was ſo buſy,

and the *canon* of ſcripture not completed) which the apoſtle calls the gift of *diſcerning ſpirits;* 1 Cor. xii. 10. And ſome are of opinion, that by virtue of this gift, Peter diſcerned the hypocriſy of Ananias and Saphira, but whatever that gift was, it is utterly ceaſed now; no man can pretend to it: But the ordinary aids and aſſiſtances of the Spirit are with us ſtill, and the lively oracles are among us ſtill; to them we may freely go for reſolution of all doubts and deciſion of perplexed caſes. And thus we may diſcern our own ſpirits, though we want the extraordinary gift of diſcerning other men's ſpirits.

I have little to ſay of this *Treatiſe* in thy hands, more than that it is well aimed and deſigned, however it be managed. The ear tries words, as the mouth taſteth meat; theſe things will reliſh according to the palates it meets with.

It is not the pleaſing, but profiting of men, that I have herein laboured for. I know of nothing in it that is like to wound the upright, or ſlightly heal the hypocrite, by crying peace, peace, when there is no peace. Scripture light hath been my Cynoſura; and with that thread in my hand I have followed the ſearch of hypocriſy through the labyrinths of the heart. Some aſſiſtance I hope I have had alſo from experience; for ſcripture and experience are ſuch relatives, and the tie betwixt them ſo diſcernible, as nothing in nature can be more ſo. What we feel in our hearts, we might have read in the ſcriptures before ever we felt it.

That the bleſſing of God may go forth with it, and accompany it to thy ſoul, reader, is the heart's deſire and prayer of,

*Thine and the Church's*

*Servant in CHRIST,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

THE

# TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY:

OR,

## THE SIGNS OF GRACE, AND SYMPTOMS OF HYPOCRISY.

Opened in a Treatiſe upon Revelation iii. 17, 18.

*Becauſe thou ſayeſt I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counſel thee to buy of me* GOLD TRIED *in the* FIRE, *that thou mayeſt be rich*, &c.

## CHAP. I.

*Wherein the text is opened, and the doctrines are propounded.*

ALTHOUGH the Revelation be a *compendium* of intricate viſions, and obſcure prophecies, containing almoſt as many myſteries as words*; yet that cloud overſhadows the prophetical part only, which begins where this chapter (with the doctrinal part) ends: here the waters are found no deeper than in other places of the ſcripture; but if we go a little farther, they become an overflowing flood: Hitherto we touch ground, but a ſtep further delivers us into the deeps, which are above the heads of the talleſt Chriſtians. Here the Spirit ſpeaks *doctrinally*, and perſpicuouſly; but in the following chapters *myſtically*, and in great obſcurity.

Seven epiſtles are found in this doctrinal part, immediately dictated from heaven, and ſent by John to the *ſeven churches of Aſia*, to inſtruct, correct, encourage, and confirm them, as their ſeveral caſes required.

My text falls in the laſt *epiſtle*, ſent to the church of Laodicea; the worſt and moſt degenerate of all the reſt. The beſt had their defects and infirmities, but this laboured under the moſt dangerous diſeaſe of all. The faireſt face of the ſeven had ſome *ſpots*, but a dangerous diſeaſe ſeems to have invaded the very heart of this.

Not that all were equally guilty, but the greateſt part (from which the whole is denominated) were *lukewarm* profeſſors; who had a name to live, but were dead; who being never thoroughly engaged in religion, eaſily embraced that principle of the Gnoſtics, which made it αδιαφορον, a matter of indifferency to own or deny Chriſt in times of perſecution; the moſt ſaving doctrine that ſome profeſſors are acquainted with. This lukewarm temper Chriſt hated; he was ſick

* *Tot myſteria quot verba.* Hieron.

of them, and loathed their indifferency; "I wish (saith he, ver. 16.) "thou wert either cold or hot." An expression of the same amount with that in 1 Kings xviii. 21. "How long halt you between two "opinions?" and is manifestly translated from the qualities of water*, which is either *cold* or *hot*; or *lukewarm*, a middle temper betwixt both, and more nauseous to the stomach than either of the former. 'Cold is the complexion and natural temper of those that 'are wholly alienated and estranged from Christ and religion: *Hot*, is 'the gracious temper of those that know and love Jesus Christ in an 'excelling degree! *lukewarm*, or *tepid*, is the temper of those who 'have too much religion to be esteemed carnal, and too little to be 'truly spiritual;' a generation that is too *politic* to venture much, and yet so *foolish* as to lose all; they are loth to forsake truth *wholly*, and more loth to follow it too *closely*: the form of religion they affect as an *honour*, the power of it they judge a *burden*.

This is that temper which the Lord hates, and this was the disease of Laodicea, which Christ, the great and only *heart-anatomist* and *soul-physician*, discovers in ver. 17. and prescribes a cure for it in ver. 18. So that the words resolve themselves into two parts; viz.

*First*, A faithful discovery } of the disease of Laodicea.
*Secondly*, A proper remedy }

1. *First*, Their disease is faithfully discovered to them, both in its symptoms, cause, and aggravations.

*First*, Its *symptoms*, an unconcerned, indifferent, regardless spirit in matters of religion, neither hot nor cold; the true temper of *formal-professors*, who never engaged themselves thoroughly and heartily in the ways of God, but can take or leave as times govern, and worldly interest comes to be concerned.

*Secondly*, Its cause and root, which is the defect and want of the truth, and power of inward grace, noted in these expressions, "Thou "art wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and naked;" i. e. thou art destitute of a real principle, a solid work of grace. These five epithets do all point at one and the same thing; namely, the defectiveness and rottenness of their foundation. The two first, ὁ ταλαιπωρος καὶ ὁ ἐλεεινος, *wretched* and *miserable*, are more general, concluding them in a sad condition, a very sinful and lamentable estate; the three last, πτωχος, τυφλος, καὶ γυμνος, viz. *poor*, *blind*, and *naked*, are more particular, pointing at those grand defects and flaws in the foundation, which made their condition so wretched and miserable.

First, *Poor*, that is, † void of righteousness and true holiness before God: These are the true riches of Christians; and whosoever wants them is poor and miserable, how rich soever he be in gifts of the mind, or treasures of the earth.

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* *Frigidos vocat plane a Christo alienos. Fervidos, vera Christi cognitione in excellenti gradu præditos. Tepidos, qui cum Christiani dici velint, nec causam religionis serio agunt, nec vitam confessioni conformem dignamque ducunt.* Sol. Glass. Rhet. Sacra. par. 3. p. 165.

† πτωχος *destitutus justitia, et sanctitate vera, coram Deo.* Grotius.

Secondly, *Blind;* * i. e. without ſpiritual illumination, and ſo neither knowing their diſeaſe, nor their remedy; the evil of ſin, nor the neceſſity of Chriſt.

Thirdly, *Naked;* † without Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. Sin is the ſoul's ſhame and nakedneſs; Chriſt's pure and perfect righteouſneſs is its covering or garment; this they wanted, how rich ſoever their bodies were adorned. Theſe were Laodiceans; i. e. a juſt or righteous people (according to the notation of that word) whoſe garments with which they covered themſelves, were made of the home-ſpun thread of their own righteouſneſs.

*Thirdly*, The diſeaſe of Laodicea is here opened to them in its aggravations: "Thou ſaidſt I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and "have need of nothing; but knoweſt not," &c.

To be really graceleſs and Chriſtleſs, is a miſerable condition;‡ but to be ſo, and yet confidently perſuaded of the contrary, is moſt miſerable: to have the very ſymptoms of death upon us, and yet tell thoſe that pity us we are as well as they, is lamentable indeed!

O the efficacy of a ſpiritual deluſion! this was their *diſeaſe*, *graceleſneſs*; and the *aggravation of it*, was their *ſenſeleſſneſs*.

*Secondly*, We have a proper remedy preſcribed, ver. 18. "I counſel "thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayeſt be rich," &c. In which we have to conſider, *Firſt*, what is preſcribed for the cure. *Secondly*, Where it is to be had. *Thirdly*, How to be obtained.

*Firſt*, What are the remedies preſcribed; and they are three; *gold*, *white raiment*, and *eye-ſalve*. Firſt, *gold*, the cure of poverty, yea, *gold tried in the fire;* i. e. grace that hath been variouſly proved already; and the more it is proved, the more its truth will be conſpicuous. The next is *white raiment*, the remedy againſt nakedneſs. And, laſtly, *eye-ſalve*, the effectual cure of blindneſs. Under all theſe choice *metaphors*, more choice and excellent things are ſhadowed, even ſpiritual graces, real holineſs, more precious than gold. Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs, the richeſt garment in all the wardrobe of heaven; and ſpiritual illumination, the moſt excellent *collyrium* or *eye-ſalve* that ever was, or can be applied to the mental eye or underſtanding of man in this world.

*Secondly*, Where theſe precious remedies may be had; and you find Chriſt hath the || *monopoly* of them all; *Buy of me*, ſaith Chriſt in the text; he is the *repoſitory* of all graces. Angels, miniſters, ordinances cannot furniſh you with them without Chriſt.

*Thirdly*, How they may be obtained from him; *Buy of me*. On



* τυφλος *Nec morbam ſciens, nec remedium*——Durham in loc.

† γυμνος *Carens juſtitia quæ veſtitus eſt Chriſtianorum.* Pareus.

‡ *Nil miſerius miſero non miſerante ſeipſum.*

*i. e.* None is more to be pitied than a pitiable ſinner who does not pity himſelf.

|| *Hoc* μονοπολιον *eſt Chriſti, extra quod nulla eſt ſalus.*

this place Eſtius, and others, build their doctrine of merit; which is to build a ſuperſtructure of hay and ſtubble upon a foundation of gold. The exigence of the very text itſelf deſtroys ſuch conceits: for what have they that are poor, wretched, miſerable, and want all things, to give as a price, or by way of merit for thoſe ineſtimable treaſures of grace? *Buying* therefore in this place can ſignify or intend no more than the acquiſition, compaſſing, or obtaining theſe things from Jeſus Chriſt, in the uſe of ſuch means and methods as he hath appointed: and in the uſe of them we merit grace no more than the *patient* merits of his *phyſician* by coming to him, and carefully following his preſcriptions in the uſe of ſuch medicaments as he freely gives him: And that place, Iſa. lv. 1. (from which this phraſe ſeems to be borrowed) fully clears it; "He that hath no money, let him "come and buy wine and milk without money, and without price."

From all which, theſe three obſervations fairly offer themſelves to us.

Doct. 1. *That many profeſſors of religion are under very great and dangerous miſtakes in their profeſſion.*

Doct. 2. *That true grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enriches the ſoul that poſſeſſeth it.*

Doct. 3. *That only is to be accounted true grace which is able to endure all thoſe trials appointed, or permitted for the diſcovery of it.*

The firſt doctrine naturally riſes out of the ſcope of the text, which is to awaken and convince unſound profeſſors.

The ſecond, from the uſe the Holy Ghoſt makes of the beſt and choiceſt things in nature, to ſhadow forth the ineſtimable worth and preciouſneſs of grace.

And the third, from that particular and moſt ſignificant metaphor of gold tried in the fire; by which I here underſtand a real and ſolid work of grace, evidencing itſelf to be ſo in all the proofs and trials that are made of it; for whatſoever is probational of grace, and puts its ſoundneſs and ſincerity to the teſt, is that to it which fire is to gold: In this ſenſe it is uſed in ſcripture, Pſal. lxvi. 10. "Thou "haſt tried us as ſilver is tried:" And Zech. xiii. 9. "I will bring "the third part through the fire, and will refine them as ſilver is "refined, and try them as gold is tried." So that whatſoever it is which examines and tries grace whether it be ſound and ſincere, that is the fire Chriſt here ſpeaks of; and ſuch grace as abides theſe trials, is the gold here intended.

## CHAP. II.

*Wherein the firſt Doctrine is opened and proved briefly, as a preliminary Diſcourſe to the principal Subject herein deſigned.*

### DOCT. I.

*That many profeſſors of religion are under very great and dangerous miſtakes in their profeſſions.*

### SECT. I.

ALL flattery is dangerous; ſelf-flattery is more dangerous; but ſelf-flattery in the buſineſs of ſalvation, is the moſt dangerous of all.

To pretend to the good we know we have not, is groſs hypocriſy; to perſuade ourſelves of the good we have not, though we think we have it, is formal hypocriſy; and this was the caſe of thoſe ſelf-deceivers in the text.

My deſign in this diſcourſe is not to ſhake the well-built hopes of any man, or beget groundleſs jealouſies, but to diſcover the real dangerous flaws in the foundation of many men's hopes for heaven: Every thing is as its foundation is, and *debile fundamentum fallit opus*; that failing, all fails.

There is a twofold ſelf-ſuſpicion or fear in God's own people: The one is a fear of *caution*, awakening the ſoul to the uſe of all the preventive means for avoiding danger; this is *laudable*: The other a groundleſs ſuſpicion of reigning hypocriſy, tending only to deſpondency: this is *culpable*: By the former the ſoul is guarded againſt *danger*; by the latter it is betrayed into needleſs trouble, and debarred from *peace*.

Good men have ſometimes more fear than they ought, and wicked men have leſs than they ought: The former do ſometimes ſhut their eyes againſt the fair evidences of their own graces; the latter ſhut their eyes againſt the ſad evidences of their ſin and miſery. This is an evil in both, but not equally dangerous; for he that ſhuts his eyes againſt his own graces and privileges, loſeth but his peace and comfort for a time; but he that ſhuts his eyes againſt the evidences of his ſin and miſery, loſeth his precious ſoul to all eternity. Of this latter ſort of ſelf-deceivers the world is full, and theſe are the men I am concerned with in this point.

Oh! that ſome men had leſs trouble! and oh! that ſome had more! If the *fooliſh virgins* had been leſs confident, they had certainly been more ſafe, Matth. xxv. If thoſe glorious profeſſors in Matth. vii. 22. had not ſhut their eyes againſt their own hypocriſy, Chriſt had not ſhut againſt them the door of ſalvation and glory. Ananias and Sapphira; Hymeneus and Philetus; Alexander and Demas, with multitudes more of that ſort, are the ſad inſtances and proofs of this

point. It is ſaid, Prov. xxx. 12. "There is a generation that is pure "in their own eyes, and yet is not waſhed from their filthineſs." Through what falſe ſpectacles do the men of that generation look upon their own ſouls; the men of that generation are multiplied in this generation: Never was any age over-run with a generation of vain, ſelf-cozening, formal profeſſors, as this generation is.

Three things I ſhall here endeavour to do:

1. To give evidence beyond contradiction to this ſad truth, that among profeſſors are found many ſelf-deceivers.

(2.) To aſſign the true cauſes and reaſons why it is ſo. And.

(3.) Improve it in thoſe practical inferences the point affords.

## SECT. II.

THAT there are multitudes of ſuch ſelf-deceivers among profeſſors, will appear,

1. *Firſt*, By this, that there are every where to be found more *profeſſors* than *converts*; unregenerate profeſſors, whoſe religion is but the effect of education. Chriſtianity, by the favour of an early providence, was the firſt comer, it firſt beſpoke them for itſelf; theſe are Chriſtians of an human creation, rather born than new-born believers. Now all theſe are ſelf-deceived, and haſting to damnation, under the efficacy of a ſtrong deluſion; "for if a man think himſelf to "be ſomething when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf," ſaith the apoſtle, Gal. vi. 3. Surely our birth-privilege, without the new-birth, is nothing, yea, worſe than nothing, as to our laſt and great account: That which ſtands for a great ſum in our *arithmetic*, it is nothing, it is but a *cypher* you ſee in God's. "Except a man be born "again (ſaith the lips of truth) he cannot ſee the kingdom of God," John iii. 3.

Poor ſelf-deceivers, ponder thoſe words of Chriſt; you have hitherto thought your civil education, your dead and heartleſs duties, enough to denominate you Chriſtians before God; but go now, and learn what the ſcripture meaneth; and be aſſured you muſt experience another manner of converſion, or elſe it is impoſſible for you to eſcape eternal damnation.

2. *Secondly*, It is too manifeſt by this, that many profeſſors are only acquainted with the externals of religion; and all their duties are no more but a compliance of the outward man with the commands of God: This is the ſuperficial religion which deceives and betrays multitudes into eternal miſery. True religion ſeats itſelf in the inward man, and acts effectually upon the vital powers, killing ſin in the heart, and purging its deſigns and delights from carnality and ſelfiſhneſs; engaging the heart for God; and ſetting it as a bow in its full bent for him, in the approaches we make to him. But how little are many profeſſors acquainted with theſe things?

Alas! if this be all we have to ſtand upon, how dangerous a ſtation is it? What is external conformity but an artificial imitation o

that which only lives in the ſouls of good men? Thus was Jehu deceived; he did many acts of external obedience to God's command, "but Jehu took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of Iſ-"rael with all his heart," 2 Kings x. 31. And this was his overthrow.

This alſo was the ruin of thoſe formaliſts, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. they came and ſat before the Lord as his people: The word was to them as a lovely ſong; mightily charmed with the modulation of the prophet's voice, and his lively geſtures; but all the while their hearts went after their covetouſneſs. And what abundance of ſuch phariſaical, ſuperficial religion is every where to be found?

3. *Thirdly*, It appears by this, that every trial made by ſufferings upon profeſſors, blows away multitudes, like dry leaves in Autumn, by a ſtormy wind; many fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs in ſhaking times; proſperity multiplies vain profeſſors, and adverſity purges the church of them; "Then ſhall many be offended," Matth. xxiv. 10.

This the ſcripture every where marks as a ſymptom of hypocriſy; Pſalm lxxviii. 8. "A generation that ſet not their hearts aright, and "whoſe ſpirit was not ſtedfaſt with God." 1 John ii. 19. "But "they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were "not of us." Matth. xiii. 21. "For when tribulation or perſecu-"tion ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is offended." But ſhould one have told them in the days of their firſt profeſſion, that all their zeal and labour in religion would have ended in this, it is like they would have replied as Hazael to the man of God, 2 Kings viii. 13. "But what, is thy ſervant a dog, that he ſhould do this great "thing?" *Quantum mutatus ab illo?*

O how unlike is their dark and dirty evening to their glorious and hopeful morning! Theſe profeſſors have more of the moon than of the ſun, little light, leſs heat, but many changes: They deceive many, yea, they deceive themſelves, but cannot deceive God. During the calm what a flouriſh do they make? And with what gallantry do they ſail? By and by you may hear *horrendas tempeſtates*, and ſoon after you may ſee *flenda naufragia*, dreadful ſhipwrecks after a furious ſtorm; and no wonder, for they wanted that ἰδιον ςεριγμον, that ballaſt and eſtabliſhment in themſelves that would have kept them tight and ſtable. 1 Pet. iii. 17.

4. *Fourthly*, It is too apparent by this, that many profeſſors ſecretly indulge and ſhelter beloved luſts under the wings of their profeſſion. This, like a worm at the root, will wither and kill them at laſt, how fragrant ſoever they may ſeem to be for a ſeaſon. Gideon had ſeventy ſons, and one baſtard; but that one baſtard was the death of all his ſeventy ſons.

Some men have many excellent gifts, and perform multitudes of duties; but one ſecret ſin indulged and allowed, will deſtroy them all at laſt. He that is partial as to the mortification of his ſins, is undoubtedly *hypocritical* in his profeſſion. If David's evidence was good

for his integrity, ſurely ſuch profeſſors will never clear themſelves of hypocriſy. "I was alſo upright before him, and kept myſelf from "mine iniquity," ſaith he, Pſalm xviii. 23. This is the right eye, and right hand which every ſincere Chriſtian muſt pluck out, and cut off, Matth. v. 29, 30.

Which is a metaphor from chirurgeons, whoſe manner it is, when the whole is in danger by any part, to cut it off, *ne pars ſincera trahatur*; leſt all periſh.

Their ſuppreſſing ſome luſts raiſeth their confidence; the indulging of one razeth the foundation of their hopes; and thus they deceive themſelves.

5. *Fifthly*, This alſo manifeſts the ſelf-deceits of many profeſſors, that the ſecret duties of religion, or at leaſt the ſecret intercourſe of the ſoul with God in them, is a ſecret hid from the knowledge and experience of many profeſſors.

To attend the ordinances of God in the ſeaſons of them, they know; to pray in their families at the ſtated hours thereof, they know; but to retire from all the world into their cloſets, and there to pour out their hearts before the Lord, they know not.

To feel ſomewhat within, paining them like an empty, hungry ſtomach, until they have eaten that hidden manna, that bread in ſecret; I mean refreſhed their ſouls with real communion with the Lord there; this is a myſtery locked up from the acquaintance of many that call themſelves Chriſtians; and yet this is made a characteriſtical note of a ſincere Chriſtian by Chriſt himſelf, in Matth. vi. 6.

O reader! if thy heart were right with God, and thou didſt not cheat thyſelf with a vain profeſſion, thou wouldſt have frequent buſineſs with God, which thou wouldſt be loth thy deareſt friend, or the wife of thy boſom ſhould be privy to: *Non eſt religio ubi omnia patent*; religion doth not lay all open to the eyes of men. Obſerved duties maintain our credit, but ſecret duties maintain our life. It was the ſaying of an heathen about his ſecret correſpondence with his friends, what need the world be acquainted with it? "Thou and I are theatre enough to each other." There are incloſed pleaſures in religion which none but renewed ſouls do feelingly underſtand.

6. *Laſtly*, How many more profeſs religion in theſe days, than ever made religion their buſineſs! Philoſophy tells us, there is a το εργον and a το παρεργον, a main buſineſs; and a by-buſineſs: the ſame is found in religion alſo.

There are "that give themſelves to the Lord," 2 Cor. viii. 5. whoſe converſation, or trade, is in heaven, Phil. iii. 18. the end or ſcope of whoſe life is Chriſt, Heb. xiii. 7, 8. who give religion the precedency both in time and affection, Pſalm v. 3. Rom. xii. 11. who are conſtant and indefatigable in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

And there are alſo that take up religion rather for oſtentation than for an occupation, who never mind the duties of religion, but when

they have nothing elſe to do; and when their outward man is engaged in the duties of it, yet their heart is not in it; they hear, they pray, η δε ψυχη εξω, as Chryſoſtom ſpeaks, but their ſouls, their thoughts, and minds are abroad. It is not their buſineſs to have fellowſhip with God in duties, to get their luſts mortified, their hearts tried, their ſouls conformed to the image of God in holineſs.

They pray as if they prayed not, and hear as if they heard not; and if they feel no power in ordinances, no quickening in duties, it is no diſappointment at all to them; for theſe were not their deſigns in drawing nigh to God in theſe appointments.

And thus you ſee what numbers of profeſſors deceive themſelves.

## SECT. III.

AND if we ſeriouſly enquire into the grounds and cauſes of this ſelf-deceit among profeſſors, we ſhall find theſe four things conſpiring to delude and cheat them in the great concern of their ſalvation.

1. *Firſt*, The natural deceitfulneſs of the heart, than which nothing is more treacherous, and falſe, Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked;"* עקב מכל הלב *Supplantativum cor, præ omnibus;* the heart is the greateſt ſupplanter, the moſt crafty and ſubtle cheat of all, that deceives us, as Jacob did his brother (to whoſe name this text alludes.) It defeats us of our heavenly heritage, as Jacob ſupplanted him in his earthly one, while we are gone a hunting after earthly trifles. And wherein its deceitfulneſs principally appears, you may ſee by the ſolemn caveat of the apoſtle, James i. 22. wherein he warns us to beware, that in hearing the word we deceive not ourſelves by falſe reaſonings; for ſo παραλογιζομενοι εαυτους imports, and may be ſtrictly rendered, falſe reaſoning themſelves, namely, by making falſe ſyllogiſms; whereby they miſconclude about their ſpiritual and eternal eſtate and condition, and befool themſelves.

The time will come when a man's own heart will be found to have the chief hand in his ruin; and what Apollodorus did but fancy his heart ſaid to him, ſome men's hearts will tell them in earneſt, when they come to the place of miſery and torment; εγω σοι τουτων αιτια, I have been the cauſe of all theſe, I have betrayed thee into all theſe torments: it was my lazineſs, my credulity, my averſeneſs to the ways of ſtrict godlineſs, mortification and ſelf-denial which have forever undone thee: when thou ſateſt under the convincing truths of the goſpel, it was I that whiſpered thoſe atheiſtical ſurmiſes into thine ear, perſuading thee that all thou heardſt was but the intemperate heat of an hot-brained zealot; when the judgments of God were denounced, and the miſery thou now feeleſt forwarned and threaten-

* Ar. Mont.

ed, it was I that whiſpered what the tongue of another once ſpake out, *Tunc credam, cum illuc venero:* I will believe it when I come thither.

Surely this is a great truth which was obſerved by the wiſeſt of men, "He that truſteth in his own heart, is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. And thouſands of ſuch fools are to be found among profeſſors.

2. *Secondly*, Satan is a chief conſpirator in this treacherous deſign; *we are not ignorant* (ſaith the apoſtle) *of his devices;* νοηματα, his ſophiſtry and ſlights, 2 Cor. ii. 11. his μεθοδιας, trains and methods of temptation, which are thoroughly ſtudied, and artificially moulded and ordered; even ſuch ſyſtems as *tutors* and *profeſſors* of *arts* and *ſciences* have, and read over to their *auditors;* as * one judiciouſly obſerves, to be the import of that text, Eph. vi. 11. Nor is it to be wondered at, conſidering his vaſt knowledge, deep malice, and long experience in this art of cheating, together with the great corruption and proneneſs of the hearts of men to cloſe with his devices, and believe his impoſtures, that ſo vaſt a number of ſouls are taken "captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26.

It is the god of this world that blinds the minds of them that believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "The god of this world," (ſo called by a Mimeſis) who leads a world of poor deluded wretches to deſtruction, having firſt *blinded their minds*, that is, deluded, and with his helliſh art practiſed upon their underſtanding, that το ηγεμονικον, leading and directive faculty, which is to the ſoul what eyes are to the body.

I remember Baſil brings in Satan thus inſulting Chriſt: I have them! I have them! for all thy blood and miracles, thy wooings and beſeechings, thy knockings and ſtrivings, I have cozened thee of them at the very gates of heaven: for all their illuminations, and taſting of the powers of the world to come, I have ſhipwrackt them in the very mouth of the haven.

3. *Thirdly*, The common works found in unregenerate ſouls deceive many, who cannot diſtinguiſh them from the ſpecial works of the Spirit in God's elect: ſee that ſtartling ſcripture, Heb. vi. 4. where you find, among the common operations of the Spirit upon apoſtates, that illumination which gives perſpicuity to their minds in diſcerning ſpiritual truths, and that frequently with more diſtinctneſs and depth of judgment than ſome gracious ſouls attain unto; beſides, it is the matter out of which many rare and excellent gifts are formed in admirable variety, which are ſingularly uſeful to others, as they are exerciſed in expounding the ſcriptures, defending the truths of Chriſt by ſolid arguments, preaching, praying, &c. and make the ſubject of them renowned and honoured in the church of God, whilſt, mean time, they are dazzled with their own ſplendour, and fatally ruined by them.

There you find alſo taſting as well as enlightening: ſo that they

* Dr. Goodwin's Child of light.

ſeem to abound not only in knowledge, but in ſenſe alſo; i. e. in ſome kind of *experience* of what they know; for experience is the bringing of things to the teſt of ſpiritual ſenſe. They do taſte or experience the good that comes by the promiſes of the word, and diſcoveries of heaven and glory, though they feel not experimentally the transforming efficacy of theſe things upon their own ſouls.

Now, that illumination furniſhing them with excellent gifts (as before was noted), enabling them to aſſent to goſpel-truths, which the ſcripture calls faith, Acts viii. 12. and working in them conviction of ſin, 1 Sam. xv. 24. reformation of life, 2 Pet. ii. 20. and touching their affections alſo with tranſient joy in the diſcovery of thoſe truths.

And this taſte, which comes ſo near to the experience, which the ſanctified ſoul enjoys, ſeems to put their condition beyond all controverſy, and lay a foundation for their ill-built confidence; nothing is more apt to beget and nouriſh ſuch a confidence than the meltings and workings of our affections about ſpiritual things; for, as a* grave divine hath well obſerved, ſuch a man ſeems to have all that is required of a Chriſtian, and to have attained the very end of all knowledge, which is operation and influence upon the affections. When they ſhall find heat in their affections, as well as light in their minds, how apt are they to ſay (as theſe ſelf-deceivers in the text did) they "are rich, and have need of nothing." Now of all the falſe ſigns of grace by which men cozen themſelves, none are ſo dangerous and deſtructive to ſouls as thoſe that come neareſt true ones: never doth Satan more effectually and ſecurely manage his cheats than when he is transformed into an angel of light.

Among this ſort of ſelf-deceivers, how many gifted men, and, among that ſort, ſome employed in the office of the miniſtry will be found, whoſe daily employment being about ſpiritual things, ſtudying, preaching, praying, &c, do conclude themſelves ſanctified perſons, becauſe they are converſant about ſacred employments, as if the ſubject muſt be, becauſe the object is ſacred. O! that ſuch would ſeriouſly ponder theſe two ſcriptures, Matth. vii. 22. "Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful things?" And 1 Cor. ix. 27.—"leſt that by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away."

4. *Laſtly*, To add no more, this ſtrengthens ſelf-deceit exceedingly in many, viz. Their obſervations of, and comparing themſelves with others. Thus the Phariſees (thoſe groſs ſelf-deceivers) "truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others," Luke xviii. 9. Their low rating of others gave them that high rate and value of themſelves. And thus the proverb is made good, *Regnat*



* Mr A. Burgeſs.

*luſcus inter cæcos*; he that hath but one eye is a king among the blind.

Thus the falſe apoſtles cheated and befooled themſelves, 2 Cor. x. 12. "But they meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and compa- "ring themſelves among themſelves, are not wiſe." God hath not made one man a meaſure or ſtandard to another man, but his word is the common beam or ſcale to try all men.

Theſe men are as ſharp-ſighted to note other men's evils as their own excellencies; to eye the miſcarriages of others with deriſion, and their own performances with admiration.

They bleſs themſelves when they behold the profane in their impieties, Luke xviii. 11. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other "men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican;" q. d. O what a ſaint am I in compariſon of theſe miſcreants! the Phariſee's religion, you ſee, runs all upon *nots*; a negative holineſs is enough to him; and the meaſure he takes of it is by compariſon of himſelf with others more externally vile than himſelf. A Chriſtian may ſay with praiſe and humility, "I am not as ſome men are; but "though he knows nothing by himſelf, yet is he not thereby juſtifi- "ed," 1 Cor. iv. 4. He neither rakes together the enormities of the vileſt, nor the infirmities of the holieſt, to juſtify and applaud himſelf as theſe ſelf-deceivers do. And theſe are the cauſes and occaſions of that general deception, under which ſo great a part of the profeſſing world bow down and periſh.

## SECT. IV.

3. IN the laſt place I ſhall improve this point variouſly, according to the importance and uſefulneſs of it, with as much brevity and cloſeneſs of application as I can. And,

*Uſe* 1. Shall be for caution to profeſſors. Before I tell you what uſe you ſhould make of it, I muſt tell you what uſe you may not make of it.

*Firſt*, Do not make this uſe of it; to conclude from what hath been ſaid, that all profeſſors are but a pack of hypocrites, and that there is no truth nor integrity in any man: this is both intolerable arrogance, to aſcend the throne of God; and unparalleled uncharitableneſs, to judge the hearts of all men.

Some men are as apt to conclude others to be hypocrites, by meaſuring their hearts by their own, as others are to conclude themſelves ſaints, by comparing their own excellencies with other men's corruptions: but, bleſſed be God! there is ſome grain among the heap of chaff, ſome true diamonds among the counterfeit ſtones: the devil hath not the whole piece; a remnant, according to election, belongs really to the Lord.

*Secondly*, Do not make this uſe of it, that aſſurance muſt needs be impoſſible, becauſe ſo many profeſſors are found to be ſelf-deceivers.

That aſſurance is one of the great difficulties in religion, is a great truth; but that it is therefore unattainable in this world, is very falſe. Popiſh doctrine indeed makes it impoſſible; but that doctrine is practicably confuted in the comfortable experience of many ſouls: all are commanded to ſtrive for it, 2 Pet. i. 10. "Give all diligence to "make your calling and election ſure:" and ſome have the happineſs to obtain it, 2 Tim. i. 12. "For I know whom I have believed; and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have "committed unto him againſt that day."

Let the ſimilar works upon hypocrites reſemble as much as they will the ſaving works of the Spirit upon believers; yet God doth always, and the ſaints do ſometimes plainly diſcern the difference.

*Thirdly*, Do not make this uſe of it, to conceal or hide the truths or graces of God, or refuſe to profeſs, or confeſs them before men, becauſe many profeſſors deceive themſelves and others alſo, by a vain profeſſion: Becauſe another profeſſeth what he hath not, muſt you therefore hide or deny what you have? It is true, the poſſeſſion of grace and truth in your own ſouls, is that which ſaves you; but the profeſſion or confeſſion of it, is that which honours God, and edifies; yea, ſometimes is the inſtrument to ſave others; it is your comfort that you feel it, it is others comfort to know that you do ſo. Oſtentation is your ſin, but a ſerious and humble profeſſion is your duty, Rom. x. 9.

SECT. V.

*Uſe* 2. HAVING ſhewed you in the former ſection what uſe you ought not to make of this doctrine, I will next ſhew you what uſe you ought to make of it; and ſurely you cannot improve this point to a better purpoſe than from it to take warning, and look to yourſelves, that you be not of that number who deceive themſelves in their profeſſion. If this be ſo, ſuffer me cloſely to preſs that great apoſtolical caution, 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinks "he ſtands, take heed leſt he fall." O profeſſors! look carefully to your foundation; be not high-minded, but fear. You have, it may be, done and ſuffered many things in and for religion; you have excellent gifts and ſweet comforts; a warm zeal for God, and high confidence of your integrity: All this may be right, (for ought I, or, it may be, you know:) but yet it is poſſible it may be falſe alſo: You have ſometimes judged yourſelves, and pronounced yourſelves upright; but remember your final ſentence is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again in his more equal balance, and ſhould ſay, *Mene Tekel*, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting: What a confounded man wilt thou be under ſuch a ſentence! *Quæ ſplendent in conſpectu hominis, ſordent in conſpectu Judicis:* Things that are highly eſteemed of men, are an abomination in the ſight of God; he ſeeth not as man ſeeth.

Thy heart may be falſe, and thou not know it; yea, it may be falſe, and thou ſtrongly confident of its integrity.

The ſaints may approve thee, and God condemn thee; Rev. iii. 1. "Thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, but thou art dead." Men may ſay, there is a true Nathaniel; and God may ſay, there is a ſelf-cozening Phariſee.

Reader, thou haſt heard of Judas and Demas; of Ananias and Sapphira; of Hymeneus and Philetus; once renowned and famous profeſſors, and thou haſt heard what they proved at laſt.

Take heed their caſe be not thine own; do they not all, as it were with one mouth cry to thee, O profeſſor! if thou wilt not come where we are, do not cozen thyſelf as we did: if thou expecteſt a better place and lot, be ſure thou get a ſincere heart: Had we been more ſelf-ſuſpicious, we had been more ſafe.

I would not ſcare you with needleſs jealouſies, but I would fain prevent fatal miſtakes. Do not you find your hearts deceitful in many things? Do not you ſhuffle over ſecret duties? Do not you cenſure the ſame evils in others, which you ſcarce reprove in yourſelves? Are there not many by-ends in duties? Do not you find you are far leſs affected with a great deal of ſervice and honour done to God by others, than with a little by yourſelves?

Is it not hard to look upon other men's excellencies without envy, or upon your own without pride?

And are you not troubled with a buſy devil, as well as with a bad heart? Hath not he that circuits the whole world, obſerved you? Hath he not ſtudied your conſtitution ſins, and found out that ſin which moſt eaſily beſets you? Hath he leſs malice againſt your ſouls than others? Surely you are in the very thicket of temptations; thouſands of ſnares are round about you. O how difficultly are the righteous ſaved! How hard to be upright! How few even of the profeſſing world win heaven at laſt!

O therefore ſearch your hearts, profeſſors, and let this caution go down to your very reins; "Let him that thinks he ſtands, take heed "leſt he fall."

Away with raſh uncharitable cenſures of others, and be more juſt and ſevere in cenſuring yourſelves. Away with dry and unprofitable controverſies, and ſpend your thoughts upon this great queſtion, Am I ſound, or am I rotten at heart? Am I a new creature, or the old creature ſtill in a new creature's dreſs and habit? Beg the Lord that you be not deceived in that great point (your integrity) whatever you may be miſtaken in. Pray that you be not given up to an heedleſs, careleſs, and vain ſpirit, and then have religious duties for a rattle, to ſtill and quiet your conſciences.

Surely that ground work can never be laid too ſure, upon which ſo great a ſtreſs as thy ſoul and eternity muſt depend. It will not repent thee, I dare promiſe, when thou comeſt to die, that thou haſt employed thy time and ſtrength to this end; Whilſt others are panting

after the duſt of the earth, and ſaying, Who will ſhew us any good? be thou panting after the aſſurance of the love of God, and crying, Who will ſhew me how to make my calling and election ſure?

O deceive not yourſelves with names and notions! Think not, becauſe you are for a ſtricter way of worſhip, or becauſe you aſſociate with, and are accordingly denominated, one of the more reformed profeſſors, that therefore you are ſafe enough: Alas! how ſmall an intereſt have titles, modes, and denominations in religion? Suppoſe a curious artiſt take a lump of lead and refine it, and caſt it into the mould, whence it comes forth ſhining, and bearing ſome noble figure, ſuppoſe of an eagle; yet it is but a leaden eagle. Suppoſe the figure of a man, and that in the moſt exact lineaments and proportions; yet ſtill it is but a leaden man: Nay, let it bear the figure of an angel, it is but a leaden angel: For the baſe and ignoble matter is the ſame it was, though the figure be not. Even ſo, take an unregenerate, carnal man, let his life be reformed, and his tongue refined, and call him a zealous Conformiſt, or a ſtrict Non-conformiſt; call him a Preſbyterian, an Independent, or what you will; he is all the while but a carnal Conformiſt, or Non-conformiſt; an unregenerate Preſbyterian, a carnal Independent; for the nature is ſtill the ſame, though the ſtamp and figure his profeſſion gives him be not the ſame.

O my friends! believe it, fine names and brave words are of little value with God: God will no more ſpare you for theſe, than Samuel did Agag for his delicate ornaments, and ſpruce appearance: Either make ſure the root of the matter, or the leaves of a vain profeſſion will not long cover you.

To be deceived by another is bad enough; but to deceive ourſelves is a thouſand times worſe.

To deceive ourſelves in truths of the ſuperſtructure, is bad; and they that do ſo ſhall ſuffer loſs, 1 Cor. iii. 12. But to deceive ourſelves in the foundation, is a deſperate deceit, and ſhipwrecks all our hopes and happineſs at once.

If any man loſe his money by a cheat, it troubles him; but to loſe his ſoul by a cheat, will confound him. If a man loſe an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, yet *omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, as Chryſoſtom ſpeaks; God hath given theſe members double, ſo that there is another left; *animam vero unam:* But the ſoul is one, and only one; and if that be damned, you have not another to be ſaved.

O therefore be reſtleſs till it be, and till you know it be, out of eternal danger!

## SECT. VI.

*Uſe* 3. IN concluſion: If ſo many profeſſors of religion be cheated in their profeſſion, let all that are well ſatisfied and aſſured of their integrity, bleſs the Lord whilſt they live for that mercy. O it is a mercy that no unſanctified ſoul can have: yea, and it is a mercy that many gracious ſouls cannot obtain, though they ſeek it

with tears, and would part with all the pleaſant things they have in the world to enjoy it.

This is that mercy that gives ſouls the higheſt pleaſure this world is acquainted with, or the ſtate of this mortality can bear; for let the well-aſſured ſoul but conſider what it is aſſured of, Chriſt, with the purchaſes of his blood. O what is this! "I am my beloved's, and "my beloved is mine," Cant. ii. 16. What a vital, raviſhing, overpowering efficacy is in that voice of faith! let it but look back a few years, and compare what it was with what it is now; it was far off, it is now made nigh, Eph. ii. 12, 13. It was not beloved, but is now beloved, Rom. ix. 25, 26. It had not obtained mercy, but now hath obtained mercy, 1 Pet. ii. 10. Or let the aſſured ſoul look forward, and compare what it now is, and hath, with what it ſhortly ſhall be made, and put in poſſeſſion of: "Beloved, (ſaith the apoſtle) now "are we the ſons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we ſhall "be: But we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, "for we ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 John iii. 2.

I ſay, let the aſſured ſoul but ſteep its thoughts, by meditation, in theſe ſubjects, and it will be impoſſible to keep him from the moſt agreeable tranſports of joy and delight.

O what a life have you in compariſon of other men? Some have two hells, one preſent, another coming; you have two heavens, one in hand, the other in hope. Some of your own brethren in Chriſt, that have been, it may be, many years panting after aſſurance, are ſtill denied it; but God hath indulged ſo peculiar a favour to you. Bleſs ye the Lord, and make his praiſe glorious.

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## CHAP. III.

*Containing the uſe and improvement of*

### DOCT. II.

*That true grace is exceeding precious, and greatly enricheth the ſoul that hath it: It is Chriſt's gold.*

### SECT. I.

THE Lord Jeſus here chuſeth the moſt pure, precious, reſplendent, durable, and valuable thing, in all the treaſuries and magazines of nature, to ſhadow forth ſaving grace, which is infinitely more excellent: Certainly that muſt be the beſt thing which the beſt things in nature can but imperfectly ſhadow forth. What was the golden oil emptied through the two golden pipes, Zech. iv. 12. but the precious graces of God, flowing through Chriſt into all his members: Gold is precious; but one drachm of ſaving grace is more

precious than all the gold of Ophir: "It cannot be gotten for gold, "neither shall silver be weighed for a price thereof," Job xxviii. 15. Surely gold and silver, sapphires, diamonds, and rubies, are not worth the mentioning, when saving grace is once mentioned. For consider it,

1. *First*, In its cause and fountain from whence it flows, and you shall find it to be the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. who, upon that account, is called *the Spirit of Grace*, Heb. x. 29. It derives its original from the Most High; it is spirit born of Spirit, John iii. 6. All the rules of morality, all human diligence and industry can never produce one gracious habit or act alone; 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Not that we "are sufficient of ourselves," &c.

Nay, we speak not becoming the incomparable worth of grace, when we say, it is the fruit and birth of the Spirit; for so are common gifts also. There are several emanations from this sun, divers streams from this fountain; but of all his operations and productions, this of saving grace is the most noble and excellent. Gifts are from the Spirit as well as grace, but grace is more excellent than the best gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 31. "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet "shew I unto you a more excellent way." Hence you read in Phil. i. 10. "Of things that are excellent," or as the original, τα διαφεροντα, might be rendered, things that differ, namely, in respect of excellency, not as good and evil, but as less good and more good differ. Gifts have their value and preciousness, but the best gifts differ as much from grace, as brass from gold, though both be generated by the influence of the same sun. Gifts (as one saith) are dead graces, but graces are living gifts; it is the most excellent production of the highest and most excellent cause.

2. *Secondly*, Consider it in its nature, and you will find it divine, 2 Pet. i. 4. "Partakers of the Divine nature," viz. in our sanctification; not that it gives us the properties of the Divine nature; they are incommunicable; but the similitude and resemblance of it is stamped upon our souls in the work of grace.

"The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him "that created him," Col. iii. 10. The schoolmen, and some of the fathers, place this image or resemblance of God, in the natural faculties of the soul, viz. the understanding, memory, and will: which is an umbrage of a trinity in unity; but it rather consists in the renovation of the faculties by grace; for in this we bear the Divine image upon our souls, and that image or resemblance of God in holiness is the beauty and honour of our souls.

It is their beauty: "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love "for delights!" saith Christ of his people, Cant. vii. 6. Natural beauty consists in the *symmetry* and comely proportion of parts each with the other; spiritual beauty in the harmony or agreeableness of our souls to God; and as it is our chiefest beauty, so certainly it is our highest honour; for it gives us access unto God, who is the

fountain of honour and glory; and this makes the righteous more excellent than his neighbour; let his neighbour be what he will, though the blood of nobles run in his veins, the righteous is more excellent than he, except saving grace be also diffused in his soul.

3. *Thirdly*, Consider it in its recipient subject, and you will find its value still to increase; for the precious oil of saving-grace is never poured into any other than an elect vessel.

Hence faith, one branch of sanctification is, with respect to its subject, stiled *The faith of God's elect*, Tit. i. 1. Whosoever finds true grace in his soul, may (during the evidence thereof) from it strongly conclude his election, looking backward, and his salvation, looking forward, Rom. viii. 30. It marks and seals the person in whom it is, for glory, "God hath set apart him that is godly for himself," Psal. iv. 3.

4. *Fourthly*, View the precious worth of grace in its excellent effects and influences upon the soul in which it inheres.

(1.) It adorns with incomparable ornaments, which are of great price in the sight of God, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Yea, it reflects such beams of glory in the soul where its seat is, that Christ himself, the author, is also the admirer of it; Cant. iv. 9. "Thou hast ravished my heart, "my sister, my spouse! thou hast ravished my heart with one of "thine eyes, with one of the chains of thy neck!" and as one overcome with its excelling beauty, he saith, "Turn away thine eyes "from me, for they have overcome me," Cant. vi. 5.

(2.) It elevates and enobles a man's spirit beyond all other principles in man; it sets the heart and affections upon heaven, and takes them up with the glory of the invisible world, Phil. iii. 20. "But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we "look for the Sa-"viour." Whilst others are trading for corn and wine, for sheep and oxen, for feathers and trifles, the gracious soul is trading with God for pardon and peace, for righteousness and life, for glory and immortality: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his "Son Jesus Christ, John i. 3.

(3.) It doth not only raise the spirit by conversing with God, and things above, but transforms the soul, by that converse into the likeness of those heavenly objects it converseth with: "It changes them into the same image," 2 Cor. iii. 18. So that though the sanctified man still remains the *who he was*, yet not the *what he was* before; the very temper of his spirit is altered.

(4.) It doth not only transform the soul in which it is, but preserves the subject in which it is: it is a singular preservative from sin; so that though sin be in them still, and works in them still, yet it cannot prevail in them still to fulfil the lusts of it, as it was wont to do, Gal. v. 17. Sin conceives, but cannot bring forth fruit unto death; this gives a miscarrying womb.

(5.) It doth not only preserve it from sin, but grace establisheth the soul, in whom it is, far beyond any other arguments without, or any

other principles within a man. "It is a good thing that the heart be "established with grace," Heb. xiii. 9. This is that which the apostle calls our own stedfastness, or that ballast we have within ourselves; which keeps us right and stable. O the excellency of grace!

(6.) To conclude; it is the root of all that precious fruit which we bring forth to God in this world: it is the root of every gracious word in our lips, and of every gracious work in our hands; be the matter of our gracious thoughts never so excellent, the matter of our heavenly discourses and prayers never so sweet, still grace is the root of the matter, Job xix. 28. O then, what a precious thing is grace.

5. *Fifthly*, View it in its properties, and you will soon discover its transcendent excellencies: the richest epithets are no hyperboles here; we seek not beyond the value of it, when we call it supernatural grace, for so it is: it comes down from above, from the Father of lights, Jam. i. 7. Nature can never be improved to that height, how much soever its admirers boast of it: nor do we strain too high when we call it immortal grace; for so hath God made it. This is that water which springs up in the sanctified soul unto eternal life, John iv. 14. It will not die when thou diest, but ascend with the soul from which it is inseparable, and be received up with it into glory, Rom. viii. 10. You may outlive your friends; you may outlive your gifts; but you cannot outlive your graces.

Shall I say it is the most sweet and comfortable thing that ever the soul was acquainted with in this world, next Jesus Christ, the author and fountain of it. Sure, if so I speak, I have as many witnesses to attest it, as there be gracious souls in the world: nothing is more comfortable than grace, except Christ; and yet without grace no soul can feel the comforts of Christ in the troubles of life, or in the straits of death. This is a spring of comfort!

6. *Sixthly*, Consider it in its design and scope; and you will still discern more and more of its precious excellency: for what is the aim and end of God in the infusions and improvements of grace, but to attemper and mould our spirits by it into a meetness and fitness for the enjoyment of himself in the world to come? Col. i. 12. "Giv- "ing thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers "of the inheritance of the saints in light." Compare this with 2 Cor. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing "is God."

O blessed design! how precious must that work be, which is wrought for so high and glorious a purpose as this is? No work more excellent, no end more noble.

7. *Seventhly*, Consider the means and instruments, both principal and subordinate, employed in this work: many blessed instruments are set on work to beget, conserve, and improve it in our souls; and these all speak the precious worth of it. No wise man will dig for a

base and worthless metal with golden mattocks. The blood of Christ was shed to procure it, Heb. xiii. 12.

The Spirit of God is sent forth to form and create it; for it is his own workmanship, Ephes. ii. 10. his fruit, Gal. v. 22.

The ordinances and officers of the gospel were at first instituted, and ever since continued in the church, for this work's sake, John xvii. 17. and Eph. iv. 12. It is the fruit of Christ's blood; yea, and it hath cost the sweat and blood of the dispensers of the gospel too.

Nay, all the works of providence look this way, and aim at this thing, Rom. viii. 28. What is the errand of all God's rods but to make us partakers of his holiness? Heb. xii. 10.

8. *Eighthly*, The high value that the most high God sets upon grace, shews it to be an excellent thing indeed: "It is of great price "in his sight," 1 Pet. iii. 4. no service finds acceptation with God, but what is performed by grace: None but sanctified vessels are meet for the master's use. "The end of the commandment is charity out "of a pure heart," 1 Tim. i. 5.

The weakest performances of grace find acceptance with him, though clogged with many sinful weaknesses and infirmities, Heb. xi. 31, 32. If God so prize it, well may we: "He that made the "jewel best understands the value of it.

9. *Ninthly*, The hypocritical pretences made to it all over the professing world, shew what a most precious and desirable thing it is: If there were not some singular glory in it, why doth every one covet to be reputed gracious? Nay, the devil himself baits many of his hooks of temptation with a shew of grace; for he knows sin hath no native beauty of its own to entice, and therefore he borrows the paint and pretence of holiness to cover it: but oh! what a dilemma will the hypocrite be posed with at last? And how can he answer it when God shall demand,

If grace were evil, why didst thou affect the name and reputation of it? And if it were good, why didst thou satisfy thyself with the empty name and shadow of it only?

10. *Tenthly*, To conclude: the incomparable esteem that all good men have for it, shews it to be a thing of inestimable price.

Grace is the sum of all their prayers, the scope of all their endeavours, the matter of their chief joy, the reward of their afflictions and sufferings; their chief joys and sorrows, hopes and fears in this world, are taken up about it. By all which it appears that its price is above rubies; and all the gold and silver in the world are but dung and dross in comparison with it.

## SECT. II.

*CONTAINING six practical inferences from this precious truth.*

*Infer.* 1. Is saving grace more precious than gold? *Let them that have it, bless God for it, and not boast.* Men's hearts are apt to puff up and swell with spiritual, as with material gold: It is hard to be an

owner of much of this gold, and not be lifted up with it. To keep down thy heart, and preserve thine eyes from being dazzled with these thy gracious excellencies, it will be needful for thee, Christian, sometimes to consider,

That although grace be one of the most excellent things that ever God created, yet it is *but a creature*, a dependent thing, 1 Cor. v. 17.

Yea, it is not only a creature, but a very imperfect creature yet in thy soul, labouring under many weaknesses, Phil. iii. 12. and sometimes ready to die, Rev. iii. 2.

Though it can do many things for you, yet it cannot justify you before God: You cannot make a garment of it to cover your guilt, nor plead the dignity of it at God's bar for your discharge: It is not your inherent, but Christ's imputed righteousness must do that for you, though in other respects it be very necessary.

Nay, remember how excellent soever it be, it is not the native growth and product of your hearts; all the grace you have is foreign to your natures; and what you have is received, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

And lastly, remember he that is most proud and conceited of his own graces will be found to be the owner of least grace, and hath most cause to question whether he hath any or none. It is the nature of grace to humble, abase, and empty the soul; and it is the strength of our corruptions which thus puffs us up with vain conceits.

*Infer.* 2. Is saving grace more excellent than gold? *What cause then have the poorest Christians to be well satisfied with their lot?* To others God hath given Ishmael's portion, the fatness of the earth; to you, Isaac's, the graces of the covenant: Their portion is paid in brass, yours in gold. Many of you are poor in the world, but "rich in "faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised," Jam. ii. 5. What is the dust of the earth to the fruits of the Spirit? You are troubled that you have no more of the world: It may be if you had more gold, you would have less grace. You consider not how many are poor and wretched in both worlds, moneyless and Christless too: You do not consider you are near come to that state in which all your wants will be fully supplied; where you shall not need the treasures of the earth, and have your desires satisfied out of the treasures of grace and glory.

*Infer.* 3. Is saving grace gold? yea, infinitely more precious than gold? *Then surely declining Christians are great losers, and have cause to be great mourners.* The remission of the least degree of grace is more to be lamented than the loss of the greatest sum of gold.

Though the habits of grace be not lost, yet the acts of grace may be suspended, 2 Sam. xii. 31. The degrees of grace may be remitted, Rev. iii. 3. The evidences of grace may be clouded, and consequently the comforts of grace may be suspended, Isa. l. 10. and the least of these is such a loss, as all the treasures of the earth cannot repair.

Well therefore may declining Chriſtians challenge the firſt place among all the mourners in the world.

*Infer.* 4. Is grace ſo invaluably precious? *How precious then ought the ordinances of God be to our ſouls, by which grace is firſt communicated, and afterwards improved in our ſouls!* "The law of thy mouth is bet-"ter unto me than thouſands of gold and ſilver," Pſal. cxix. 72. and good reaſon, whilſt it imparts and improve that to which gold and ſilver are but droſs and dung.

None but theſe that value not grace, will ever ſlight the means, or deſpiſe and injure the inſtruments thereof. It is a ſad ſign of a graceleſs world when theſe precious things fall under contempts and ſlights.

*Infer.* 5. If grace be ſo precious, how watchful ſhould all gracious perſons be in the days of temptation! The deſign of temptation is to rob you of your treaſure: When cut-purſes get into the crowd, we uſe to ſay, Friends, look to your purſes. How many brave Chriſtians have we read and heard of, that have rather choſen to part with their lives than with their graces, who have "reſiſted unto blood, "ſtriving againſt ſin?" Heb. xii. 4.

O Chriſtians! you live in a cheating age; many ſeeming Chriſtians have loſt all, and many real Chriſtians have loſt much; ſo much, that they are like to ſee but little comfort in this world; who are like to go mourning to the grave with that lamentation, Job xxix. 2, 3. "O "that it were with me as in times paſt!"

*Inf.* 6. To conclude: Is there ſuch precious worth in ſaving grace? *Then bleſs God for, and diligently uſe all means to increaſe and improve it in your ſouls.* It is gold for preciouſneſs, and for uſefulneſs, and muſt not be laid up in a napkin: That is a ſin condemned by the very ſcope of that parable, Matth. xxv. 14, 15, &c.

All Chriſtians indeed have not the ſame advantages of improvement; but all muſt improve it according to the advantages they have, in order to an account. Reſerved Chriſtians, who live too abſtracted from the ſociety and communion of others, and diſperſe not their ſtreams abroad to the benefit of others, nor improve the graces of others for their own benefit, are wanting both to their own duty and comfort. See you a man rich in grace, O trade with him if you can to improve yourſelves by him; and the rather, becauſe you know not how ſoon death may ſnatch him from you, and with him all his ſtock of grace is gone from you too, except what you made your own whilſt you converſed with him: But alas! inſtead of holy, profitable, ſoul-improving communion, ſome are ſullenly reſerved; ſome are negligent and lazy; ſome are litigious and wrangling; more apt to draw forth the droſs than the gold; I mean the corruptions, than graces of others. And how few there be that drive a profitable trade for increaſe of grace, is ſad to conſider.

And as grace is not improved by communion with men, ſo I doubt moſt Chriſtians thrive but little in their communion with God: We

are too seldom in our closets, too little upon our knees; and when we are there, we gain but little; we come not off such gainers by duty as we might. O Christians! think when you are hearing and praying, I am now trading with heaven for that which is infinitely better than gold. God is rich to all that call upon him: What a treasure may I get this hour, if the fault be not in mine own heart? And thus of the second observation.

## CHAP. IV.

*Wherein the third doctrine, being the main subject of this treatise, is opened, and the method of the whole discourse stated.*

### DOCT. III.

*That only is to be accounted true grace, which is able to endure all those trials appointed or permitted for the discovery of it.*

### SECT. I.

THE most wise God hath seen it fit to set all his people in a state of trial in this world. First, he tries, and then he crowns them; James i. 12. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, "δοκιμος, i. e. [probation or trial;] for when he is tried, he shall "receive the crown of life," &c.

No man can say what he is; whether his graces be true or false, till they be tried and examined by those things which are to them as fire is to gold. These self-deceivers in the text, thought they had grace; yea, they thought they had been rich in grace; but it proved no better than dross: And therefore Christ here counsels them to buy of him gold tried in the fire; i. e. true grace indeed, which appears to be so upon the various proofs and examinations of its sincerity, which are to be made in this world, as well as in the great solemn trial it must come to in the world to come.

The scripture speaks of a twofold trial, viz.

A trial of mens { Opinions, and Graces.

1. *First*, The opinions and judgments of men are tried as by fire; in which sense we are to understand that place, 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13. "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, pre- "cious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made "manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed "by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is."

This text speaks of such persons as held the foundation of Christianity, but yet superstructed such doctrines and practices as were no more able to endure the trial, than hay, wood, or stubble, can

endure the fire.* Such a perſon hereby brings himſelf to danger: and though the apoſtle will not deny the poſſibility, yet he aſſerts the difficulty of his ſalvation; "He ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire †;" i. e. as a man is ſaved by leaping out of his houſe at midnight, when it is all on fire about his ears; for ſo that phraſe imports, Amos iv. 11. and Jude 23. Glad to eſcape naked, and with the loſs of his goods; bleſſing God he hath his life for a prey: As little regard ſhall ſuch have to their erroneous notions and unſcriptural opinions at laſt.

2. *Secondly*, The graces of men are brought to the teſt, as well as their opinions. Trial will be made of their hearts, as well as of their heads; and upon this trial the everlaſting ſafety and happineſs of the perſon depends. If a man's opinions be ſome of them found hay or ſtubble, yet ſo long as he holds the head, and is right in the foundation, he may be ſaved; but if a man's ſuppoſed graces be found ſo, all the world cannot ſave him: There is no way of eſcape, if he finally deceive himſelf herein. And of this trial of graces my text ſpeaks: Sincere grace is gold tried by fire.

There is a twofold trial of grace; active and paſſive.

*Firſt*, An active trial of it, in which we try it ourſelves, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Examine yourſelves; prove yourſelves;" i. e. meaſure your hearts, duties and graces, by the rule of the word; ſee how they anſwer to that rule: Bring your hearts and the word together by ſolemn ſelf-examination; confer with your reins, and commune with your own hearts.

*Secondly*, A paſſive trial of it: whether we try it or no, God will try it, he will bring our gold to the touchſtone, and to the fire. "Thou, O Lord, knoweſt me; thou haſt ſeen me, and tried mine "heart towards thee," ſaith the prophet Jer. xii. 3.

Sometimes he tries the ſtrength and ability of his ſervants graces; and thus he tried Abraham, Heb. xi. 17. And ſometimes he tries the ſoundneſs and ſincerity of our graces; ſo the *Epheſian angel* was tried, and found droſs, Rev. ii. 2. And ſo Job was tried, and found true gold, Job xxiii. 10. Theſe trials are not made by God for his own information; for he knows what is in man; his eyes pierce the heart and reins; but for our information; which is the true ſenſe of Deut. viii. 2. "Thou ſhalt remember all the way which the Lord "thy God led thee theſe forty years in the wilderneſs to humble "thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart;" i. e. to make thee know it, by giving thee ſuch experiments and trials of it in thoſe wilderneſs ſtraits and difficulties.

And theſe are the trials of grace I am here to ſpeak of, not excluding the active trials made by ourſelves; no, no, all theſe trials

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* Upon a thorough trial they vaniſh into ſmoke.

† From which judgment he ſhall eſcape juſt as one does naked, or only with his life, out of the midſt of flames. *Chryſoſtom.*

made by God upon us, are deſigned to put us upon the trial of ourſelves: When God tries, we ſhould try too.

Now the method into which I ſhall caſt this diſcourſe, ſhall be to ſhew you,

1. *Firſt*, What thoſe things are which try the ſincerity of our graces, as fire tries gold.

2. *Secondly*, For what ends doth God put the graces of his people upon ſuch trials in this world.

3. *Thirdly*, That ſuch grace only is ſincere as can endure theſe trials.

4. *Fourthly*, and *laſtly*, To apply the whole, in the main uſes of it.

SECT. II.

1. Firſt, *WHAT thoſe things are which try the ſincerity of grace, as fire tries gold.*

Before I enter into particulars, it will be needful to acquaint you, that the ſubject before me is full of difficulties. There is need, as one ſpeaks, of much cautious reſpect to the various ſizes and degrees of growth among Chriſtians, and the viciſſitudes of their inward caſes; elſe we may darken and perplex the way, inſtead of clearing it.

The portraiture of a Chriſtian is ſuch as none can draw to one model, but with reſpect to the infancy of ſome, as well as the age and ſtrength of others.

Great heed ought alſo to be had in the application of marks and ſigns; we ſhould firſt try them, before we try ourſelves or others by them. Marks and ſigns are by ſome diſtinguiſhed into excluſive, incluſive, and poſitive: Excluſive marks ſerve to ſhut out bold pretenders, by ſhewing them how far they come ſhort of a ſaving work of grace; and they are commonly taken from ſome neceſſary common duty, as hearing, praying, &c. He that hath not theſe things, cannot have any work of grace in him; and yet if he do them, he cannot from thence conclude his eſtate to be gracious: He that ſo concludes, he deceives himſelf.

Incluſive marks rather diſcover the degrees than the truth of grace, and are rather intended for comfort than for conviction: If we find them in ourſelves, we do not only find ſincerity, but eminency of grace; They being taken from ſome raiſed degree and eminent acts of grace in confirmed and grown Chriſtians.

Betwixt the two former there is a middle ſort of marks, which are called poſitive marks, and they are ſuch as are always, and only found, in regenerate ſouls: The hypocrite hath them not; the grown Chriſtian hath them, and that in an eminent degree: The pooreſt Chriſtian hath them in a lower, but ſaving degree: Great care muſt be taken in the application of them. And it is paſt doubt, that many weak and injudicious Chriſtians have been greatly prejudiced by finding the experiences of eminent Chriſtians propoſed as rules to mea-

ſure their ſincerity by. Alas! theſe no more fit their ſouls, than Saul's armour did David's body.

Theſe things being premiſed, and a due care carried along with us through this diſcourſe, I ſhall next come to the particulars, and ſhew you what thoſe things are which diſcover the ſtate and tempers of our ſouls. And though it be true, that there is no condition we are in, no providence that befals us, but it takes ſome proof, and makes ſome diſcovery of our hearts; yet, to limit this diſcourſe, and fall into particulars as ſoon as we can, I ſhall ſhew what trials are made of our graces in this world, by our proſperity, and our adverſity; by our corruptions, and our duties, and, laſtly, by our ſufferings upon the ſcore and account of religion.

SECT. I.

FIRST, Proſperity, ſucceſs, and the increaſe of outward enjoyments, are to grace what fire is to gold. Riches and honours make trial what we are; and by theſe things many a falſe heart hath been detected, as well as the ſincerity and eminency of others graces diſcovered. We may fancy the fire of proſperity to be rather for comfort than trial; to refreſh us rather than to prove us; but you will find proſperity to be a great diſcovery, and that ſcarce any thing proves the truth and ſtrength of men's graces and corruptions more than that doth: *Rara virtus eſt humilitas honorata*, ſaith Bernard; to find humility with honour, is to find a Phœnix. Let an obſcure perſon be lifted up to honour, and how ſteady and well compoſed ſoever he was before, it is a thouſand to one but his eyes will dazzle, and his head run round when he is upon the lofty pinacle of praiſe and honour*; Prov. xxvii. 21. "As the fining-pot for ſilver, and the furnace for gold, ſo is a man to his praiſe:" Put the beſt gold into the fining-pot of praiſe, and it is a great wonder if a great deal of droſs do not appear, Iſa. xxxix. 2. the vain-glory of good Hezekiah roſe like froth or ſcum upon the pot, when heated by proſperity. It was ſuch a fining-pot to Herod, as diſcovered him to be droſs itſelf, Acts xii. 23. How did that poor worm ſwell under that trial into the conceit of his being a god, and was juſtly deſtroyed by worms, becauſe he forgat himſelf to be one? We little think what a ſtrange alteration an exalted ſtate will make upon our ſpirits. When the prophet would abate the vain confidence of Hazael, who would not believe that ever he would be turned into ſuch a ſavage beaſt as the prophet had foretold; he only tells him, "The Lord hath ſhewed me, that thou "ſhalt be king over Syria," 2 Kings viii. 13. The meaning is, Do not be too confident Hazael, that thy temper and diſpoſition can never alter to that degree; thou never yet ſatteſt on a throne: When men ſee the crown upon thy head, then they will better ſee the true temper of thy heart.

* *Magiſtratus indicat virum: i. e.* Preferment proves a man.

How humble was Israel in the wilderness, tame and tractable in a lean pasture; but bring them once into Canaan, and the world is strangely altered; then "we are lords, (say they) we will come no "more unto thee," Jer. ii. 2, 7, 31. Prosperity is a crisis both to grace and corruption. Thence is that caution to Israel, Deut. x. 11, 12. "When thou hast eaten, and art full, then beware lest thou "forget the Lord thy God." Then beware, that is the critical time; surely that man must be acknowledged rich, very rich in grace, whose grace suffers no diminution or eclipse by his riches; and that man deserves double honour, whose pride the honours of this world cannot provoke and inflame.

It was a sad truth from the lips of a pious divine in Germany upon his death-bed; being somewhat disconsolate by reflecting upon the barrenness of his life, some friends took thence an occasion to commend him, and mind him of his painful ministry and fruitful life among them; but he cried out, *Auferte ignem, adhuc enim paleas habeo;* Withdraw the fire, for I have chaff in me; meaning, that he felt his ambition like chaff catching fire from the sparks of their praises. Like unto which was the saying of another, *He that praises me, wounds me.*

But to descend into the particular discoveries that prosperity and honour made of the want of grace in some, and of the weakness of grace in others; I will shew you what symptoms of hypocrisy appear upon some men under the trial of prosperity, and what signs of grace appear in others under the same trial.

SECT. IV.

PROSPERITY discovers many sad symptoms of a naughty heart; and, among others, these are ordinarily most conspicuous.

1. *First*, It casts the hearts of some men into a deep oblivion of God, and makes them lay aside all care of duty; *Raro fumant fœlicibus aræ;* the altars of rich men seldom smoke, Deut. xxxii. 13, 14, 15. Jeshurun sucked honey out of the rock, eat the fat of lambs, and kidneys of wheat: But what was the effect of this; he kicked and forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. Instead of lifting up their hearts in an humble thankful acknowledgment of God's bounty, they lifted up the heel in a wanton abuse of his mercy: In the fattest earth we find the most slippery footing.

He that is truly gracious may, in prosperity, remit some degrees; but a carnal heart there loseth all that which in a low condition he seemed to save. Augur's deprecation, as to himself, no doubt, was built upon his frequent observation how it was with others; Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Lest I be full, and deny God."

It is said Eccles. v. 12. "That the abundance of the rich will not "suffer him to sleep;" and I wish that were the worst injury it did

him; but alas! it will not ſuffer him to pray, to meditate, to allow time and thoughts about his eternal concernments; he falls aſleep in the lap of proſperity, and forgets that there is a God to be ſerved, or a ſoul to be ſaved. O this is a dangerous ſymptom of a very graceleſs heart!

2. *Secondly*, Proſperity meeting with a graceleſs heart, makes it wholly ſenſual, and entirely ſwallows up its thoughts and affections: Earthly things transform and mould their hearts into their own ſimilitude and nature; the whole ſtrength of their ſouls goes out to thoſe enjoyments. So thoſe graceleſs, yet proſperous perſons are deſcribed, Job xxi. 11, 12, 13. "They take the timbrel and harp, and "rejoice at the ſound of the organ: they ſpend their days in wealth." *They take the timbrel*, not the Bible. "They rejoice at the ſound of "the organ;" not a word of their rejoicing in God. "They ſent "forth their little ones in the dance:" That is all the catechiſm they are taught: "They ſpend their days in wealth;" their whole time, that precious ſtock and talent is wholly laid out upon theſe ſenſitive things: Either the pleaſure of it powerfully charms them, or the cares of it wholly engroſs their minds, that there is no time to ſpare for God. *They live in pleaſure upon earth*, as it is, Jam. v. 5. juſt as the fiſh lives in the water, its proper element: Take him off from theſe things, and put him upon ſpiritual, ſerious, heavenly employments, and he is *Piſcis in arido*; like a fiſh upon the dry land.

Now, though proſperity may too much influence and enſnare the minds of good men, and eſtrange them too much from heavenly things; yet thus to engroſs their hearts, and convert them into their own ſimilitude and nature, ſo that theſe things ſhould be the centre of their hearts, the very proper element in which they live, is utterly impoſſible.

An hypocrite indeed may be brought to this, becauſe, though Janus like, he have two faces, yet he really hath but one principle, and that is wholly carnal and earthly: So that it is eaſy to make all the water to run into one channel, to gather all into one entire ſtream, in which his heart ſhall pour out all its ſtrength to the creature.

But a Chriſtian indeed hath a double principle that acts him; though he have a law of ſin that moves him one way, yet there is in him alſo the law of grace, which thwarts and croſſes that principle of corruption: So that as grace cannot do what it would, becauſe of ſin; ſo neither can ſin do what it would, becauſe of grace, Gal. v. 17.

The heart of a Chriſtian, in the midſt of enſnaring, ſenſitive enjoyments, finds indeed a corrupt principle in it, which would incline him to fall aſleep upon ſuch a ſoft pillow, and forget God and duty; but it cannot. O no! it cannot do ſo; there is a principle of grace within him, that never leaves jogging, diſturbing, and calling upon him, till he riſe and return to his God, the true reſt of his ſoul.

3. *Thirdly*, A falſe pretender to religion, an hypocritical profeſſor, meeting with proſperity and ſucceſs, grows altogether unconcern-

ed about that intereſt of religion, and ſenſeleſs of the calamities of God's people. Thus the prophet convinces the Jews of their hypocriſy, Amos vi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. "They were at eaſe in Zion, and "truſted in the mountain of Samaria:" And ſo, having a ſhadow of religion, and a fulneſs of all earthly things, they fell to feaſting and ſporting: "They drank wine in bowls, and anointed themſelves "with the chief ointments, but were not grieved for the affliction "of Joſeph." They condoled not, *Gnal ſheber*, over the breakings or tearing to pieces of Joſeph: If they were out of danger once, let the church ſhift for itſelf, they are ſecure in a warm neſt: Let the birds of prey catch and devour that flock with which they ſometimes aſſociated, they are not touched with it. Moſes could not do ſo, though in the greateſt ſecurity and confluence of the honours and pleaſures of Egypt, Acts vii. 23. Nehemiah could not do ſo, though the ſervant and favourite of a mighty monarch, and wanted nothing to make him outwardly happy; yet the pleaſures of a king's court could not cheer his heart, or ſcatter the clouds of ſorrow from his countenance, whilſt his brethren were in affliction, and the city of his God lay waſte. Nehemiah ii. 1, 2, 3. Nor indeed can any gracious heart be unconcerned and ſenſeleſs; for that union that all the ſaints have with Chriſt their head, and with one another, as fellow-members in Chriſt, will beget ſympathy among them in their ſufferings, 1 Cor. xii. 26.

### SECT. V.

BUT as the fire of proſperity diſcovers this and much more droſs in a graceleſs heart, ſo it diſcovers the ſincerity and grace of God's people: I ſay not that it diſcovers nothing but grace in them: O that it did not! alas! many of them have had a great deal of droſs and corruption diſcovered by it, as was noted before: But yet in this trial, the graciouſneſs and uprightneſs of their hearts will appear in theſe, and ſuch like workings of it.

1. *Firſt*, Under proſperity, ſucceſs, and honour, the upright heart will labour to ſuppreſs pride, and keep itſelf lowly and humble; and ſtill the more grace there is, the more humility there will be. If God lift him up, he will lay himſelf low, and exalt his God high. So did Jacob when God had raiſed and enlarged him; Gen xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth "which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant, for with my ſtaff I paſ-"ſed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands."

Great was the difference in Jacob's outward condition at his return, from what it was at his firſt paſſage over Jordan; then poor, now rich; then ſingle and comfortleſs, now the head of a great family: Yea, but though this outward eſtate was altered, the frame of his heart was not altered. Jacob was an holy and humble man when he went out, and ſo he was when he returned: He ſaw a multi-

tude of mercies about him, and among them all, not one but was greater than himſelf.

I dare not ſay every Chriſtian under proſperity can at all times manifeſt like humility; but I am ſure what pride and vanity ſoever may riſe in a gracious heart tried by proſperity, there is that within him which will give check to it: He dare not ſuffer ſuch proud thoughts to lodge quietly in his heart; for, alas! he ſees that in himſelf, and that in his God, that will abaſe him: Grace will make him look back to his original condition, and ſay, with David, "What am I, "O Lord God? and what is my father's houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?" 2 Sam. vii. 18.

It will make him look in, and ſee the baſeneſs of his own heart, and the corruptions that are there, and admire at the dealings of God with ſo vile a creature. O, thinks he, if others did but know what I know of myſelf, they would abhor me more than now they eſteem and value me.

2. *Secondly*, Proſperity uſually draws forth the ſaints love to the God of their mercies: that which heats a wicked man's luſts, warms a gracious man's heart with love and delight in God.

Theſe were the words of that lovely ſong which David ſang in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul; and he ſaid, "I will love thee, O Lord, "my ſtrength," Pſalm xviii. title and ver. 1. compared. Theſe outward things are not the main grounds and motives of their love to God; no; they love him when he takes away, as well as when he gives: but they are ſanctified inſtruments to inflame their love to God: they boil up a wicked man's luſts, but they melt a gracious man's ſoul. O in what a pang of love did David go into the preſence of God under the ſenſe of his mercies! his melting mercies! when he thus poured out his whole ſoul in a ſtream of love to his God, 2 Sam. vii. 19, 20. "Is this the manner of men, O Lord "God? And what can David ſay more unto thee?" An expreſſion that turns up the very bottom of his heart.

3. *Thirdly*, Proſperity and comfortable Providences do uſually become cautions againſt ſin, when they meet with a ſanctified ſoul. This is the natural inference of a gracious ſoul from them: hath God pleaſed me, then hath he obliged me to take more care to pleaſe him: O let me not grieve him, that hath comforted me! So Ezra ix. 13. "After ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould we again break thy com-"mandments!" What! break his commandments who hath broken our bonds! God forbid!

It was an excellent reſolution of a Chriſtian once, who receiving an eminent mercy at the ſame time he felt himſelf under the power of a ſpecial corruption; "Well, (ſaith he) now will I go forth in the "ſtrength of this mercy, to mortify and ſubdue that corruption." I will not meaſure every Chriſtian by the eminent workings of grace in ſome one; but ſurely ſo far I may ſafely go, that ſincerity knows

not how to ſin, becauſe grace hath abounded, any more than it dare ſin, that grace may abound.

4. *Fourthly*, A truly gracious ſoul will not be ſatisfied with all the proſperity and comforts in the world for his portion: *Not thine, Lord, but thee*, is the voice of grace. When providence had been more than ordinarily bountiful in outward things to Luther, he began to be afraid of its meaning, and earneſtly proteſted, God ſhould not put him off ſo. "The Lord is my portion, ſaith my ſoul," Lam. iii. 24. and the ſoul can beſt tell what it hath made its choice, and whereon it hath beſtowed its chief delights and expectations.

An unſound heart will accept theſe for its portion: if the world be ſure to him, and his deſigns fail not there, he can be content to leave God, and ſoul, and heaven, and hell at hazard; but ſo cannot the upright. Theſe things in ſubordination; but neither theſe, nor any thing under the ſun, in compariſon with, or oppoſition to God.

## CHAP. V.

*Shewing what probation adverſity makes of the ſincerity or unſoundneſs of our hearts.*

### SECT. I.

THAT adverſity is a furnace to try of what metal our hearts are, none can doubt, that hath either ſtudied the ſcriptures, or obſerved his own heart under afflictions.

When the droſs and ruſt of hypocriſy and corruption had almoſt eaten out the heart of religion among the Jews, then ſaith God, "I "will melt them, and try them; for what ſhall I do for the daugh- "ter of my people?" Jer. ix. 7. Here affliction is the furnace, and the people are the metal caſt into it, and the end of it is trial. *I will melt them, and try them;* what other courſe ſhall I take with them? If I let them alone, their luſts, like the ruſt and canker in metals, will eat them out. Proſperity multiplies profeſſors, and adverſity brings them to the teſt; then hirelings quickly become changlings. The gilded potſherd gliſters till it come to ſcouring. The devil thought Job had been ſuch a one, and moves that he may be tried this way; being confident he would be found but droſs in the trial, Job i. 11. But though the furnace of affliction diſcovered ſome droſs in him (as it will in the beſt of men) yet he came forth as gold.

In this furnace alſo grace is manifeſted: it is ſaid, Rev. xiii. 10. Here is the faith and patience of the ſaints;" i. e. here is the trial and diſcovery of it in theſe days of adverſity. It was a weighty ſaying of * Tertullian to the perſecutors of the church in his days, *Pro-*

* *Tertul. in Apol.*

*batio innocentiæ noſtræ, eſt iniquitas veſtra;* Your wickedneſs is the trial of our innocency. Conſtantius, the father of Conſtantine, made an exploratory decree, that all who would not renounce the Chriſtian faith, ſhould loſe their places of honour and profit. This preſently ſeparated the droſs from the gold, which was his deſign; for many renounced Chriſtianity, and thereupon were renounced by him; and thoſe that held their integrity, were received into favour.

In time of proſperity, hypocriſy lies covered in the heart like neſts in the green buſhes; but when the winter of adverſity hath made them bare, every body may ſee them without ſearching.

But to fall into cloſer particulars; it will be neceſſary to enquire what effects of adverſity are common to both the ſound and the unſound; and then what are proper to either in this cloſe trial by adverſity.

## SECT. II.

IT will be expedient to the deſign I manage in this diſcourſe, to ſhew in the firſt place what are the common effects of adverſity to both the godly and ungodly; for in ſome things they differ not, but as it is with the one, ſo alſo with the other: As,

1. *Firſt*, Both the godly and ungodly may fear adverſity before it comes: to be ſure a wicked man cannot, and it is evident many godly men do not come up to the height of that rule, James i. 2. "To "account it all joy when they fall into diverſe temptations," or trials by adverſity.

It is ſaid, Iſa. xxxiii. 14. "The ſinners in Sion are afraid; "trembling ſurprizeth the hypocrite;" namely under the apprehenſion of approaching calamities; and it is true alſo, the ſaints in Zion may be afraid: "My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments," ſaid holy David, Pſal. cxix. 120. and Job iii. 23. "The thing which I greatly feared (ſaith that upright ſoul) is "come upon me." There is a vaſt difference betwixt a ſaint's firſt meeting with afflictions, and his parting with them; he entertains them ſometimes with trembling; he parts with them rejoicing, ſmiling on them, and bleſſing them in the name of the Lord. So that by this the upright, and the falſe heart, are not diſcriminated; even ſanctified nature declines ſuffering and troubles.

2. *Secondly*, Both the godly and ungodly may entertain afflictions with regret and unwillingneſs when they come. Afflictions and troubles are wormwood and gall, Lam. iii. 19. And that goes not down pleaſantly with fleſh and blood, Heb. xii. 11. "No affliction "for the preſent ſeemeth joyous but grievous;" he means to God's own people; they are in heavineſs through manifold temptations or trials by the rod, 1 Pet. i. 6. When God gives the cup of affliction into the hands of the wicked, how do they reluctate and loath it? How do their ſtomachs riſe at it? And though the portion of the ſaints cup be much ſweeter than theirs, (for that bitter ingredient of

God's vindictive wrath is not in it,) yet even they ſhrink from it, and loth they are to taſte it.

3. *Thirdly*, Both the one and the other may be impatient and fretful in adverſity; it is the very nature of fleſh and blood to be ſo. "The wicked are like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt, whoſe "waters caſt forth mire and dirt," Iſa. lvii. 20. It is an alluſion to the unſtable and ſtormy ocean: you know there is naturally an eſtuation and working in the ſea, whether it be incenſed by the wind or no: but if a violent wind blow upon the unquiet ocean, O what a raging and foaming is there! what abundance of traſh and filth doth it at ſuch times caſt out!

Now, though grace make a great difference betwixt one and another, yet I dare not ſay, but even a gracious heart may be very unquiet and tumultuous in the day of affliction. Sanctified ſouls have their paſſions and luſts which are too little mortified; even as ſweetbrier and holy-thiſtles have their prickles, as well as the worthleſs bramble. Jonah was a good man, yet his ſoul was ſadly diſtempered by adverſe providences; Jonah iv. 9. "Yea, (ſaith he, and that to "his God) I do well to be angry, even unto death."

4. *Fourthly*, But the one and the other may be weary of the rod, and think the day of adverſity a tedious day, wiſhing it were once at an end. Babylon ſhall be weary of the evil that God will bring upon it, Jer. li. *ult.* And O that none of Zion's children were weary of adverſity too! How ſad a moan doth Job make of his long-continued affliction, Job xvi. 6, 7. "Though I ſpeak, my grief is not aſſuaged; "and though I forbear, what am I eaſed? But now he hath made "me weary."

And if you look into Pſalm vi. 3, 6. you may ſee another ſtrong Chriſtian even tired in the way of affliction: "My ſoul (ſaith David "in that place) is ſore vexed, but thou, O Lord, how long? I am "weary with my groaning."

5. *Fifthly*, Both the one and the other may be driven to their knees by adverſity. "Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee; they have "poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening was upon them," Iſa. xxvi. 16. Not that a godly perſon will pray no longer than the rod is at his back; O no; he cannot live long without prayer, how few calls ſoever he hath to that duty by the rod; but when the rod is on his back, he will be more frequently and more fervently upon his knees; indeed many gracious hearts are like children's tops, which will go no longer than they are whipt; they cannot find their knees and their tongues till God find a rod to excite them. A dangerous ſymptom. The ſame affliction may put a gracious and graceleſs ſoul to their knees; but though in the external matter of duty, and in the external call or occaſion of duty, they ſeem to agree, yet is there a vaſt difference in the principles, manner, and ends of theſe their duties; as will evidently appear in its proper place in our following diſcourſe.

But by what hath been ſaid in this ſection, you may ſee how in

ſome things the holy upright ſoul acts too like the unſanctified, and in other things how much the hypocrite may act like a ſaint; he may be externally humbled, ſo was Ahab; he may pray under the rod, Mal. ii. 13. yea, and requeſt others to pray for him, ſo did Simon, Acts viii. 24.

SECT. III.

BUT though the ſound and unſound heart differ not in ſome external carriages under the rod, yet there are effects of adverſity which are proper to either, and will diſcriminate them. To which end let us firſt ſee what effects adverſity is uſually followed withal in unſound and carnal hearts: and we ſhall find among others, theſe five ſymptoms of a naughty heart appearing under croſſes and afflictions.

1. *Firſt*, A graceleſs heart is not quickly and eaſily brought to ſee the hand of God in thoſe troubles that befal it, and to be duly affected with it; Iſa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will "not ſee:" when it has ſmitten, or is lifted up to ſmite, they ſhut their eyes; it is the malice of this man, or the negligence of that, or the unfaithfulneſs of another, that hath brought all this trouble upon me. Thus the creature is the horizon that terminates their ſight, and beyond that they uſually ſee nothing. Sometimes indeed the hand of God is ſo immediately manifeſted, and convincingly diſcovered in afflictions, that they cannot avoid the ſight of it; and then they may, in their way, pour out a prayer before him; but ordinarily they impute all to ſecond cauſes, and overlook the firſt cauſe of their troubles.

2 *Secondly*, Nor is it uſual with theſe men under the rod to retire into their cloſets, and ſearch their hearts there, to find out the particular cauſe and provocation of their affliction: "No man repent-"ed him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, What have I done?" Jer. viii. 6. What curſed thing is there with me, that hath thus incenſed the anger of God againſt me! God viſits their iniquities with afflictions, but they viſit not their own hearts by ſelf-examinations. God judges them, but they judge not themſelves: He ſhews their iniquities in a clear glaſs, but none ſaith, *What have I done?* This phraſe, *What have I done?* is the voice of one that recollects himſelf after a raſh action; or the voice of a man aſtoniſhed at the diſcovery afflictions make of his ſins; but no ſuch voice as this is ordinarily heard among carnal men.

3. *Thirdly*, An unſound profeſſor, if left to his choice, would rather chuſe ſin than affliction; and ſees more evil in that than in this.

And it cannot be doubted, if we conſider the principle by which all unregenerate men are acted, is ſenſe, not faith. Hence Job's friends would have argued his hypocriſy, Job xxxvi. 21. And had their application been as right as their rule, it would have concluded it; *This* (viz. ſin) *haſt thou choſen, rather than affliction.*

I do not ſay that an upright man cannot commit a moral evil, to eſcape a penal evil. O that daily obſervation did not too plentifully furniſh us with ſad inſtances of that kind! But upright ones do not, dare not, upon a ſerious deliberate diſcuſſion and debate, chuſe ſin rather than affliction; what they may do upon ſurpriſals and in the violence of temptation, is of another nature.

But a falſe and unſound heart diſcovers itſelf in the choice it makes upon deliberation, and that frequently when ſin and trouble come in competition. Put the caſe, ſaith Auguſtine, a ruffian ſhould with one hand ſet the cup of drunkenneſs to thy mouth, and with the other a dagger to thy breaſt, and ſay, drink or die; thou ſhouldeſt rather chuſe to die ſober, than to live a drunkard: And many Chriſtians have reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin, and, with renowned Moſes, choſen affliction the worſt of afflictions, yea, death itſelf in the moſt formidable appearance, rather than ſin; and it is the habitual temper and reſolution of every gracious heart ſo to do, though thoſe holy reſolutions are ſometimes over-borne by violence of temptation.

But the hypocrite dreads leſs the defilement of his ſoul, than the loſs of his eſtate, liberty, or life. If you aſk upon what ground then doth the apoſtle ſuppoſe, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. a man may give his body to be burnt, and not have charity; that the *ſalamander* of hypocriſy may live in the flame of martyrdom? The anſwer is at hand; They that chuſe death in the ſenſe of this text, do not chuſe it to eſcape ſin, but to feed and indulge it. Thoſe ſtrange adventures (if any ſuch be) are rather to maintain their own honour, and enrol their names among worthy and famous perſons to poſterity; or out of a blind zeal to their eſpouſed errors and miſtakes, than in a due regard to the glory of God, and the preſervation of integrity. 'I fear to ſpeak it, 'but it muſt be ſpoken, (ſaith * Hierom), That even martyrdom it-'ſelf, when ſuffered for admiration and applauſe, profits nothing, 'but that blood is ſhed in vain.'

4. *Fourthly*, It is the property of an unregenerate ſoul, under adverſity, to turn from creature to creature for ſupport and comfort, and not from every creature to God alone. So long as their feet can touch ground, I mean, feel any creature-relief or comfort under them, they can ſubſiſt and live in afflictions; but when they loſe ground, when all creature-refuge fails, then their hearts fail too.

Thus Zedekiah, and the ſelf-deceiving Jews, when they ſaw their own ſtrength failed them, and there was little hope left that they ſhould deliver themſelves from the Chaldeans, what do they in that ſtrait? Do they, with upright Jehoſhaphat ſay, "Our eyes are unto "thee?" No, their eyes were upon Egypt for ſuccour, not upon Heaven; well, Pharaoh and his aids are left ſtill, all hope is not



* *Timeo dicere, ſed dicendum eſt; martyrium ipſum ſi ideo fiat ut admirationi et laudi habeatur a fratribus; fruſtra ſanguis effuſus eſt.* Hier.

gone, Jer. xxxvii. 9. See the like in Ahaz, in a ſore plunge and diſtreſs, he courts the king of Aſſyria for help, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, 23. That project failing, why then he will try what the gods of Damaſcus can do for him; any way rather than the right way, *Flectere ſi nequeam ſuperos, Acheronta movebo.*

So it is with many others: if one child die, what do they do, run to God, and comfort themſelves in this, the Lord liveth, though my child die. If an eſtate be loſt, and a family ſinking, do they with David comfort themſelves in the everlaſting covenant, ordered and ſure? No; but if one relation die, there is another alive; if an eſtate be loſt, yet not all; ſomething is left ſtill, and the caſe will mend.

As long as ever ſuch men have any viſible encouragement, they will hang upon it; and not make up all in Chriſt, and encourage themſelves in the Lord. To tell them of rejoicing in the Lord, when the fig-tree bloſſoms not, is what they cannot underſtand.

5. *Fifthly*, To conclude; an unſound heart never comes out of the furnace of affliction purged, mortified, and more ſpiritual and holy than when he was caſt into it; his ſcum and droſs is not there ſeparated from him; nay, the more they are afflicted, the worſe they are. "Why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more? ye will revolt more "and more," Iſa. i. 5. And, to keep to our metaphor, conſult Jer. vi. 29. God had put that incorrigible people into the furnace of affliction, and kept them long in that fire; and what was the iſſue? Why, ſaith the prophet, "The bellows are burnt, the lead is con-"ſumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, &c. reprobate ſil-"ver ſhall men call them, becauſe the Lord hath rejected them."

If the fire of affliction be continually blown till the very bellows be burnt, that is, the tongue, or rather the lungs of the prophet, which have ſome reſemblance; though theſe be even ſpent in reproving, and threatening, and denouncing woe upon woe, and judgment upon judgment; and God fulfils his word upon them; yet ſtill they are as before; the droſs remains: though Jeruſalem be made a pot, and the inhabitants the fleſh boiling in it, as is noted (pertinently to my diſcourſe) in Ezek. xxiv. 6, 13. *the ſcum remains with them*, and cannot be ſeparated by the fire; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe no affliction in itſelf purges ſin, but as it is ſanctified, and works in the virtue of God's bleſſing, and in purſuance of the promiſes.

O think on this you that have had thouſands of afflictions in one kind and another, and none of them all have done you good; they have not mortified, humbled, or benefited you at all: And thus you ſee what the effects of adverſity are, when it meets with a graceleſs heart.

## SECT. IV.

BY this time, reader, I ſuppoſe thou art deſirous to know what effects adverſity and affliction uſe to have when they meet with an honeſt and ſincere heart: Only, before I come to particulars, I

think it needful to acquaint thee, that the fruits of afflictions are moſtly after-fruits, and not ſo diſcernible by the Chriſtian himſelf under the rod, as after he hath been exerciſed by it, Heb. xii. 11. and calmly reflects upon what is paſt; nor doth every Chriſtian attain the ſame meaſure and degree; ſome rejoice, others commonly ſubmit; but I think theſe ſeven effects are ordinarily found in all upright hearts that paſs under the rod.

1 *Firſt*, The ſincere and upright ſoul betakes itſelf to God in affliction; Job. i 20. When God was ſmiting, Job was praying; when God afflicted, Job worſhipped: So David, Pſalm cxvi. 3, 4. "I "found ſorrow and trouble, then called I upon the name of the "Lord." And when the meſſenger of Satan buffeted Paul. "For "this cauſe (ſaith he) I beſought the Lord thrice," 2 Cor. xii. 8. Alas! whither ſhould a child go in diſtreſs, but to its father?

2. *Secondly*, He ſees and owns the hand of God in his afflictions, how much or little ſoever of the inſtruments of trouble appear. *The Lord hath taken away*, ſaith Job, Job i. 21. *God hath bidden him*, ſaith David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. If the blow come from the hand of a wicked man, yet he ſees that wicked hand in God's righteous hand, Pſalm xvii. 14. And this apprehenſion is fundamental to all that communion men have with God in their afflictions, and to all that peaceableneſs and gracious ſubmiſſion of their ſpirits under the rod: He that ſees nothing of God in his troubles, hath nothing of God in his ſoul.

3. *Thirdly*, He can juſtify God in all the afflictions and troubles that come upon him, be they never ſo ſevere. "Thou art juſt in all "that is brought upon us," ſaith Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. "Thou "haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve," ſaith Ezra, Ezra ix. 13. "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not conſumed," ſaith the church, Lam. iii. 22. Are we in Babylon? It is a mercy we are not in hell. If God condemn him, yet he will juſtify God; If God caſt him into a ſea of trouble, yet he will acknowledge, in all that ſea of trouble, there is not one drop of injuſtice. If I have not deſerved ſuch uſage from the hands of men, yet I have deſerved worſe than this at the hands of God.

4. *Fourthly*, Afflictions uſe to melt and humble gracious hearts; there is an habitual tenderneſs planted in their ſpirits, and a juſt occaſion quickly draws it forth: And ſo uſual a thing it is for gracious hearts to be humbled under the afflictings of God, that affliction is upon that ſcore called humiliation: The effect put for the cauſe, to ſhew where one is, the other will be, 2 Cor. xii. 21 *My God will humble me*, i. e. he will afflict me with the ſight of your ſins and diſorders; and if a gracious ſoul be ſo apt to be humbled for other men's ſins, much more for his own.

5. *Fifthly*, The upright ſoul is inquiſitive under the rod, to find out that evil for which the Lord contends with him by affliction; Job x. 2. "Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me:" And

Job xxxiv. 32. "That which I ſee not, teach thou me: If I have "done iniquity I will do no more." So Lam. iii. 39, 40. "Let us "ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." In afflicting, God ſearches them, and under affliction they ſearch themſelves: Willing they are to hear the voice of the rod, and glad of any diſcovery it makes in their hearts.

6. *Sixthly*, The upright heart chuſeth to ly under affliction, rather than to be delivered from it by ſin. I ſay, this is the choice and reſolution of every upright heart, however it may be ſometimes overborne by the violence of temptation, Heb. xi. 35. *Not accepting deliverance*, viz. upon ſinful terms and conditions.

They are ſenſible how the fleſh ſmarts under the rod, but had rather it ſhould ſmart, than conſcience ſhould ſmart under guilt. Affliction, ſaith an upright ſoul, grieves me, but ſin will grieve God; affliction wounds my fleſh, but ſin will wound my ſoul. Deliverance I long for, but I will not pay ſo dear for it, how much ſoever I deſire it: *Nolo tanti emere pœnitentiam:* Outward eaſe is ſweet, but inward peace is ſweeter.

7. *Seventhly*, He prizeth the ſpiritual good gotten by affliction, above deliverance from it, and can bleſs God from his heart for thoſe mercies, how dear ſoever his fleſh hath paid for them, Pſalm cxix. 67, and 71. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Such is the value the people of God have for ſpiritual graces, that they cannot think them dear, whatever their fleſh hath paid for them. The mortification of one luſt, one diſcovery of ſincerity, one manifeſtation of God to their ſouls, doth much more than make amends for all that they have endured under the rod.

Is patience improved, ſelf-acquaintance increaſed, the vanity of the creature more effectually taught, longings after heaven enflamed? O bleſſed afflictions, that are attended with ſuch bleſſed fruits? It was the ſaying of a holy man, under a ſore trouble for the death of an only ſon, when in that dark day God had graciouſly manifeſted himſelf to his ſoul; 'O, (ſaith he) I would be contented, if it were poſſi-'ble, to lay an only ſon in the grave every day I have to live in the 'world, for one ſuch diſcovery of the love of God as I now enjoy.'

## CHAP. VI.

*Shewing indwelling ſin to be to grace, what fire is to gold; and how the ſoundneſs and unſoundneſs of our hearts are diſcovered by our carriage towards it.*

### SECT. I.

PROSPERITY and adverſity put ſincerity to the trial; but nothing makes a deeper ſearch into our boſoms, nothing ſifts our ſpirits more narrowly, or tells us what our ſtate is more plain-

ly, than our behaviour towards that corruption that dwells in us; the thorn is next neighbour to the roſe: Sin and grace dwell not only in the ſame ſoul, but in the ſame faculties. The collier and fuller dwell in one room; what one cleanſes the other blacks. Of all the evils God permits in this world, none is more grievous to his people than this: They ſometimes wonder why the Lord will ſuffer it to be ſo: why, ſurely, among other wiſe and holy ends of this permiſſion, theſe are ſome.

They are left to try you, and to humble you: There is no intrinſic goodneſs in ſin; but, however, in this it occaſions good to us, that by our carriage towards it, we diſcern our ſincerity. The touch-ſtone is a worthleſs ſtone in itſelf, but it ſerves to try the gold; 1 John iii. 9, 10. "Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit "ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he "is born of God: In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the "children of the devil:" q. d. In reſpect of their carriage towards ſin, the one and the other is plainly manifeſted: This is that which ſeparates the droſs from the gold, and ſhews you what the true ſtate of men's perſons, and tempers of their hearts are. By not ſinning, we are not to underſtand a total freedom from it in this world, as if it implied any ſuch perfection of the people of God in this world; that is the Popiſh and Pelagian ſenſe: Nor yet muſt we take it in the Arminian ſenſe, who, to avoid the argument of the orthodox, will underſtand it of the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt. What a ſtrange thing would it be, to make that a characteriſtical note of diſtinction betwixt the godly and ungodly, which ſo very few, even of the moſt ungodly, are ever guilty of?

But the manner of our behaviour towards ſin, and our carriage towards it before, or under, or after the commiſſion of it, in that the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil.

Now, there are five things relating to ſin, that diſcriminate and mark the ſtate of the perſons: The difference is diſcernible.

In our
1. Abſtinence from ſin.
2. Hatred of ſin.
3. Trouble about ſin.
4. Subjection to ſin.
5. Oppoſition to ſin.

SECT. II.

(1.) THE grounds and motives of our abſtinence do very clearly manifeſt the ſtate of our ſouls; what they are in the regenerate and unregenerate, is our next work: And let it be conſidered,

1. *Firſt*, That an unſound and unrenewed heart may abſtain from one ſin, becauſe it is contrary to, and inconſiſtent with another ſin: For, it is with the ſins of our natures, as it is with the diſeaſes of our bodies: Though all diſeaſes be contrary to health, yet ſome diſeaſes,

as the fever and palſy, are contrary to each other. So are prodigality and covetouſneſs, hypocriſy and profaneneſs. Theſe oppoſe each other, not for mutual deſtruction, as ſin and grace do, but for ſuperiority, each contending for the throne, and ſometimes taking it by turns. It is with ſuch perſons as with that poſſeſſed man, Matth. xvii. 15. whom the ſpirit caſts ſometimes into the fire, ſometimes into the water: Or if one ſubdue the other, yet the heart is alſo ſubdued to the vaſſalage of that luſt that is uppermoſt in the ſoul.

2. *Secondly*, An unrenewed ſoul may be kept from the commiſſion of ſome ſin, not becauſe there is a principle of grace within him, but becauſe of ſome providential reſtraint without him, or upon him: For it often falls out, that when men have conceived ſin, and are ready to execute it, providence claps on the fetters of reſtraint, and hinders them from ſo doing.

This was the caſe with Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6. and 17. compared, *I with-held thee:* And though perſons ſo reſtrained, have not the good of ſuch providences, yet others have; for by it a world of miſchief is prevented in the world, which otherwiſe would break out; and to this act of providence we owe our lives, liberties, eſtates, and comforts in this world.

3. *Thirdly*, An unſound heart may not commit ſome ſins, not becauſe he truly hates them, but becauſe his conſtitution inclines him not to them: Theſe men are rather beholden to a good temper of body, than to a gracious temper of ſoul. Some men cannot be drunkards if they would, others cannot be covetous and baſe; they are made *e meliori luto*, of a more refined metal than others; but chaſte and liberal, juſt and ſober nature, is but nature ſtill: The beſt nature, in all its endowments, is but nature at the beſt.

4. *Fourthly*, A graceleſs heart may be reſtrained from ſin by the force of education and principles of morality that were inſtilled into it. Thus Jehoaſh was reſtrained from ſin, 2 Kings xii. 2. "And Je-"hoaſh did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, all the "days wherein Jehoiadah the prieſt inſtructed him." The fear of a parent or maſter will do a great deal more with ſome in this caſe than the fear of God. The influence of a ſtrict education nips off the excreſcencies of budding vice. The way we are taught when young, we keep when old: This is the influence of man upon man, not the influence of the regenerating Spirit upon men.

5. *Fifthly*, A graceleſs heart may by kept from ſome ſins by the fear of the events, both in this world, and that to come. Sin that is followed with infamy and reproach among men, may on this ground be forborne; not becauſe God hath forbidden it, but becauſe human laws will puniſh it, and the ſober world will brand us for it: And ſome look farther, to the puniſhment of ſin in hell; they are not afraid to ſin, but they are afraid to burn.

Here ſin is like a ſweet roſe in a brake of thorns; fain we would have it, but we are loth to tear our fleſh to come by it. It is good

that sin is prevented any way; but to be kept on this ground from sin, doth not argue the estate of the person to be good: And thus you see some of the grounds on which carnal men are restrained: and in this "the children of the devil are manifest."

SECT. III.

BUT there are grounds of abstinence from sin, by which "the children of God are also manifested;" and such are these that follow:

1. *First*, A sincere heart dares not sin because of the eye and fear of God, which is upon him: So you find it in Job xxxi. 1, and 4. he durst not allow his thoughts to sin, because he lived under the awe of God's eye. Nehemiah durst not do as former governors had done, though an opportunity presented to enrich himself, *because of the fear of his God*, Nehem. v. 15. The soul that lives under the awe of this eye, will be conscientious where no discovery can be made by creatures, as if all the world were looking on, Levit. xix. 14. "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before "the blind; but shalt fear thy God, I am the Lord."

What if a man do curse the deaf, the deaf cannot hear him, and what if he do put a stumbling-block before the blind, the blind cannot see him: True, but God sees him, God hears him; that is enough to a man that hath the fear of the Lord upon his heart.

2. *Secondly*, As the fear of God, so the love of God, is a principle of restraint from sin to the soul that is upright. This kept back Joseph from sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" *How can I?* He speaks as a man that feels himself bound up from sin by the goodness and love of God, that had been manifested to him, q. d. Hath he delivered me from the pit into which my envious brethren cast me? Hath he, in so miraculous a way, advanced me to all this honour and power in Egypt? and now, after all his kindness and love to me, shall I sin against him? O how can I do this against so good, so gracious a God? So Psal. xcvii. 10. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Love will cry out in the hour of temptation, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Dost thou thus requite the Lord for all his kindnesses?

3. *Thirdly*, As the love of God, so the intrinsical evil and filthiness that is in sin keeps back the gracious soul from it, Rom. xii. 9. "Abhor that which is evil," αποστυγουντες το πονηρον, hate it as hell itself: Or, as the French translation hath it, be in horror. As the apprehensions of hell, so the apprehensions of sin impress horror upon the mind that is sanctified: Nothing more loathsome to an holy soul; its aversations from it are with the highest indignation and loathing.

4. *Fourthly*, The renewed nature of a saint restrains him from sin; Gal. v. 17. "The spirit lusteth against the flesh, so that ye cannot "do the thing ye would." Ye cannot, why cannot ye? because it is against your new nature.

Beloved, This is a very remarkable thing in the experience of all renewed men, That, upon the renovation of men's principles, their delights, and their averſations and loathings are laid quite croſs and oppoſite to what they were before. In their carnal ſtate, vain company and ſinful exerciſes were their delight. To be ſeparated from theſe, and tied to prayer, meditation, heavenly diſcourſe and company; O what a bondage would that have been! Now to be tied to ſuch carnal ſociety, and reſtrained from ſuch duties of godlineſs, and the ſociety of the godly, become a much ſorer bondage to the ſoul.

5. *Fifthly, Experience of the bitterneſs of ſin* is a reſtraint to a gracious heart. They that have had ſo many ſick days and ſorrowful nights for ſin as they have had, are loth to taſte that wormwood and gall again, which their ſoul hath ſtill in remembrance; 2 Cor. vii. 11. "In that "ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought!" He would not grapple with thoſe inward troubles again, he would not have the cheerful light of God's countenance eclipſed again for all, and much more than all, the pleaſures that are in ſin.

6. *Sixthly*, The conſideration of the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin, powerfully with-holds a gracious ſoul from the commiſſion of it; Rom. vi. 6. "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might "be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin." Were there a knife or ſword in the houſe that had been thruſt through the heart of your father, would you ever endure the ſight of it? Sin was the ſword that pierced Chriſt, and ſo the death of Chriſt becomes the death of ſin in his people. Thus the children of God and the children of the devil are manifeſt, in the principles and reaſons of their abſtinence from ſin.

SECT. IV.

(2.) SECONDLY, They are alſo manifeſted by their hatred of ſin. This puts a clear diſtinction betwixt them; for no falſe or unregenerate heart can hate ſin as ſin; he may indeed,

1. *Firſt*, Hate ſin in another, but not in himſelf: Thus one proud man hates another; *Calco ſuperbiam Platonis*, ſaid Diogenes, when he trampled Plato's fine clothes under foot; I ſpurn the pride of Plato. *Sed majori ſuperbia*, as Plato ſmartly replied, Thou trampleſt upon my pride, but it is with greater pride. "Why (ſaith Chriſt to "the hypocrite) beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, "but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Matth. vii. 3. How quick in eſpying, and raſh in cenſuring the ſmalleſt fault in another, is the hypocrite! it was but one fault, and that but a ſmall one, but a mote that he could find in another; yet this he quickly diſcerns: It may be there were many excellent graces in him, theſe he overlooks, but the mote he plainly diſcerns.

It may be that mote in his brother's eye, had drawn many tears from it, but theſe he takes no notice of; and meanwhile there is a

beam, i. e. great horrid flagitious evil, in himſelf; but it is too near him to be diſcerned or bewailed: This is a ſad ſymptom of a naughty heart.

2. *Secondly*, He may hate it in its effects and conſequents; not in its own nature; as the thief hates the gallows, not the wickedneſs that he hath done. It is not ſin in itſelf, but ſin in its connexion with hell, that is frightful to him.

The unſound profeſſor could wiſh that there were no ſuch threatening in the Bible againſt ſin. When ſin tempts him, I would, ſaith he, but I fear the conſequence. O ſin, could I ſeparate thee from hell, nothing ſhould ſeparate thee and me.

3. *Thirdly*, He may hate it in a mood or pang, but not with a rooted habitual hatred. It is plain from 2 Pet. ii. 22. That ſin may ſometimes lie upon the conſcience of an unregenerate man, as a load lies upon a ſick ſtomach; and ſo he may diſcharge himſelf of it by reformation, reſtitution, &c. but a little time reconciles the quarrel betwixt him and his luſt again: If they fall out, they will fall in again: "The dog returned to his vomit, and the ſow that was waſhed to "her wallowing in the mire."

But an upright ſoul hates ſin in another manner; and in this hatred of ſin the children of God are manifeſt.

1. *Firſt*, The oppoſition of ſin to God, is the very ground and formal reaſon upon which a gracious ſoul oppoſes and hates it. If it be oppoſite to the holy nature and law of God, it cannot but be odious in his eyes: This cut David's heart, Pſal. li. 4. "Againſt thee, "thee only have I ſinned," q. d. I have wronged Uriah greatly, I have wronged myſelf and family greatly; but the wrong I have done to others is not worth naming, in compariſon of the wrong I have done to thee.

2. *Secondly*, The upright ſoul hates ſin in himſelf more than he hates it in any other; as a man hates a ſerpent in the hedge, but much more in his own boſom: Rom. vii. 23. "But I ſee another law in "my members;" and ver. 21. "I find then a law, that when I "would do good, evil is preſent with me:" q. d. I do not know how others find it, but I am ſure I find ſin in my very boſom, in my very bowels, it is preſent with me. O wretched man that I am! A gracious ſoul can mourn to ſee it in others, but to find it in himſelf pierceth him to the very heart.

3. *Thirdly*, The gracious ſoul hates not only this or that particular ſin, but the whole kind, every thing that is ſinful. True hatred is προς τα γενη, * of the whole nature or kind;' Pſal. cxix. 104. "I "hate every falſe way." His reaſonings proceed *a quatenus ad omne*, from ſin as ſin, concluding againſt every ſin; ſins that are profitable and pleaſant, as well as ſins that have neither profit nor pleaſure; ſins



* Ariſt. Rhet. lib. 2. cap. 4.

that are ſecret, as well as ſins that are open, and will defame him.

And, before this trial, a falſe heart cannot ſtand; for he always indulges ſome luſt: There is an iniquity which he cannot be ſeparated from.

4. *Fourthly*, The ſincere ſoul hates ſin with an irreconcileable hatred. There was a time when ſin and his ſoul fell out, but there never will be a time of reconciliation betwixt them again.

That breach, which effectual conviction once made, can never be made up any more: "They will return no more to folly," Pſal. lxxxv. 8. And indeed it ſeems to them that have ſuffered ſo much for ſin, that have endured ſo many fears and ſorrows for it, the greateſt folly in the world to return to ſin again: No, they admire the mercy of their eſcape from ſin to their dying day, and never look back upon their former ſtate but with ſhame and grief.

Aſk a convert, Would you be back again where once you were? Would you be among your old companions again? Would you be fulfilling the luſts of the fleſh again? And he will tell you, he would not run the hazard to abide one day or one night in that condition again, to gain all the kingdoms of the world the next morning.

5. *Fifthly*, The ſincere ſoul hates ſin with a ſuperlative hatred; he hates it more than any other evil in the world beſides it. Penal evils are not pleaſant in themſelves, but yet if he muſt endure them, or ſin, then ſufferings he chuſes; Heb. xi. 25. "Chuſing rather to "ſuffer affliction than enjoy the pleaſures of ſin;" the worſt of ſufferings rather than the beſt of ſin.

6. *Sixthly*, To conclude; ſo deep is the hatred that upright ones bear to ſin, that nothing pleaſes them more than the thoughts of a full deliverance from it doth; Rom. vii. 34. "I thank God, through "Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." What doth he ſo heartily thank God for? O for a proſpect of his final deliverance from ſin, never to be entangled, defiled, or troubled with it any more: And this is one thing that ſweetens death to the ſaints as any thing in the world can do, except Chriſt's victory over it, and lying in the grave for us. To think of a grave, is not pleaſant in itſelf; but to think of a parting-time with ſin, that is ſweet and pleaſant indeed.

SECT. V.

(3.) THIRDLY, The children of God and the children of the devil; pure gold and vile droſs are manifeſt as in hatred of ſin, ſo in their troubles and ſorrows about ſin.

All trouble for ſin argues not ſincerity; ſome have reaſon to be troubled even for their troubles for ſin: So have they,

1. *Firſt*, That are only troubled for the commiſſion of ſome more groſs ſins, that ſtartle the natural conſcience, but not for inward ſins that defile the ſoul. Judas was troubled for betraying innocent blood, but not for that baſe luſt of covetouſneſs that was the root of it, or the want of ſincere love to Jeſus Chriſt; Matth. xxvii. 4, 5. Out-

ward ſins are ſins *majoris infamiæ*, of greater ſcandal; but heart-ſins are oftentimes *majoris reatus*, ſins of greater guilt. To be troubled for groſſer ſins, and have no trouble for ordinary ſins daily incurred, is an ill ſign of a bad heart.

2. *Secondly*, A graceleſs heart may be much troubled at the diſcovery of ſin, when it is not troubled for the guilt of ſin; Jer. ii. 26. "As the thief is aſhamed when he is found, ſo is the houſe of Iſ-"rael aſhamed." Hence it is that they ſtick not to commit ten ſins againſt God, to hide one ſin from the eyes of men. It is a mercy that ſin is the matter of men's ſhame, and that all are not arrived to that height of impudence to declare their ſin as Sodom, and glory in their ſhame: But to be aſhamed only becauſe men ſee it, and not with Ezra to ſay, "O my God, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to look up unto "thee," Ezra ix. 6. aſhamed that thou ſeeſt it, is but hypocriſy.

3. *Thirdly*, A graceleſs heart may be troubled for the rod that ſin draws after it, but not for ſin itſelf, as it provokes God to inflict rods.

But the troubles of upright ones for ſin are of another kind and nature.

1. *Firſt*, They are troubled that God is wronged, and his Spirit troubled by their ſins: So the penitent prodigal, "I have ſinned "againſt heaven, and in thy ſight," Luke xv. 21. Againſt heaven, that is, againſt him whoſe throne is in heaven, a great, glorious, and infinite Majeſty! a poor worm of the earth hath lifted up his hand againſt the God of heaven.

2. *Secondly*, They are troubled for the defilement of their own ſouls by ſin: Hence they are compared in Proverbs xxv. 26. to a troubled fountain. You know it is the property of a living ſpring, when any filth falls into it, or that which lies in the bottom of its channel, is raiſed and defiles its ſtreams, never to leave working until it hath purged itſelf of it, and recovered its purity again.

So it is with a righteous man, he loves purity in the precept, Pſalm cxix. 140. and he loves it no leſs in the principle and practice: he thinks it is hell enough to lie under the pollution of ſin, if he ſhould never come under damnation for it.

3. *Thirdly*, They are troubled for the eſtrangements of God, and the hidings of his face from them becauſe of their ſin. It would go cloſe to an ingenuous ſpirit to ſee a dear and faithful friend whom he hath grieved, to look ſtrange and ſhy upon him at the next meeting, as if he did not know him: much more doth it go to the heart of a gracious man to ſee the face of God turned from him, and not to be towards him as in times paſt. This went to David's heart after his fall, as you may ſee, Pſalm li. 11. "Caſt me not away from thy "preſence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" q d. Lord, if thou turn thy back upon me, and eſtrange thyſelf from me, I am a loſt man; that is the greateſt miſchief that can befal me.

4. *Fourthly*, Their troubles for ſin run deep to what other men's

do. They are ſtrong to bear other troubles, but ſink and faint under this: Pſalm xxxviii. 4. Other ſorrows may for the preſent be violent, and make more noiſe, but this ſorrow ſoaks deeper into the ſoul.

5. *Fifthly*, Their troubles for ſin are more private and ſilent troubles than others are, "their ſore runs in the night," as it is Pſalm lxxvii. 2. Not but that they may, and do open their troubles to men (and it is a mercy when they meet with a judicious, tender, and experienced Chriſtian to unboſom themſelves unto) but when all is done, it is God and thy ſoul alone that muſt whiſper out the matter. *Ille vera dolet, qui ſine teſte dolet*: This is a ſincere ſorrow for ſin indeed, which is expreſſed ſecretly to God in the cloſet.

6. *Sixthly*, Their troubles are incurable by creature-comforts. It is not the removing ſome outward preſſures and inconveniences that can remove their burden; nothing but pardon, peace, and witneſſed reconciliation, can quiet the gracious heart.

7. *Seventhly*, Their troubles for ſin are ordinate and kept in their own place; they dare not ſtamp the dignity of Chriſt's blood upon their worthleſs tears and groans for ſin: * *Lava lachrymas, Domine*; Lord, waſh my ſinful tears in the blood of Chriſt, was once the deſire of a true penitent. And thus our trouble for ſin ſhews us what our hearts are.

SECT. VI.

(4.) FOURTHLY, The behaviour and carriage of the ſoul with reſpect to ſubjection to the commands of ſin, ſhews what our eſtate and condition is. This will ſeparate droſs from gold. All unregenerate men are the ſervants of ſin, they ſubject themſelves to its commands. This the ſcripture ſometimes calls a "converſation "in the luſts of the fleſh," Eph. ii. 3. Sometimes the "ſelling of "themſelves to ſin," 1 Kings xxi. 20. Now, as a † judicious divine obſerves, though the children of God complain with Paul, Rom. vii. 14, 15. that they are "ſold under ſin," yet there is a vaſt difference betwixt theſe two: The ſaints are ſold to it by Adam, but others by their own continued conſent. But to ſhew you the difference in this matter, I conceive it neceſſary to ſhew wherein the reigning power of ſin doth not conſiſt, and then wherein it doth; that you may plainly diſcern who are in ſubjection to the reigning power of their corruptions, and who are not. Now there be divers things common both to the regenerate and unregenerate; and we cannot ſay the dominion of ſin lies in any or in all of them, viz. abſtractly and ſimply conſidered.

1. *Firſt*, Both one and the other having original corruption dwelling in them, may alſo find this fountain breaking forth into groſs and ſcandalous ſins: But we cannot ſay that becauſe original corrup-

* Auguſt. † Dr Reynolds.

tion thus breaks forth into groſs and ſcandalous ſins in both, therefore it muſt needs reign in the one as well as in the other; a righteous man may "fall before the wicked," as it is, Prov. xxv. 26. He may fall into the dirt of groſſer iniquities, and furniſh them with matter of reproach. So did David, Peter, Abraham, and many more of the Lord's upright-hearted ones, whoſe ſouls nevertheleſs ſin did not reign over by a voluntary ſubjection to its commands, nor muſt this embolden any to ſin with more liberty.

2. *Secondly*, Though an upright ſoul fall once and again into ſin, though he reiterate the ſame act of ſin which he hath repented of before; yet it cannot merely from thence be concluded, that therefore ſin reigns over him as it doth over a wicked man that makes it his daily trade. I confeſs every reiteration of ſin puts a further aggravation upon it: And it is ſad we ſhould repent and ſin, and ſin and repent: but yet you read, Prov. xxiv. 16. "A juſt man falleth ſeven "times, and riſeth up again:" Job's friends were good men, yet he tells them, "Theſe ten times have ye reproached me," Job xix. 3. This indeed ſhews a heart that greatly needs purging; for it is with relapſes into ſpiritual as it is with relapſes into natural diſeaſes: A recidivation or return of the diſeaſe ſhews that the morbific matter was not duly purged; but though it ſhew the foulneſs, it doth not always prove the falſeneſs of the heart.

3. *Thirdly*, Though the one may be impatient of the reproof of his ſin, as well as the other; yet that alone will not conclude ſin to be in full dominion over the one, as it is over the other.

It is pity any good man ſhould ſtorm at a juſt rebuke of ſin; that ſuch a precious oil as is proper to heal, ſhould be conceited to break his head: but yet fleſh will be tender and touchy, even in good men. Aſa was a good man, and yet he was wroth with the prophet who reproved him, as you find, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. yet I doubt not but their conſciences ſmite them for it, when pride ſuffers not another to do it; a reproof may be well-timed and ill managed by another, and ſo may provoke, but they will hear the voice of conſcience in another manner.

4. *Fourthly*, Though in both ſome one particular ſin may have more power than another, yet neither doth this alone conclude, that therefore that ſin muſt reign in one, as it doth in another. Indeed the beloved luſt of every wicked man is king over his ſoul; but yet a godly man's conſtitution, calling, *&c.* may incline him more to one ſin than another; and yet neither that nor any other may be ſaid to be in dominion; for though David ſpeaks of his iniquity, i. e. his ſpecial ſin, Pſalm xviii. 23. which ſome ſuppoſe to be the ſin of lying, from that intimation, Pſalm cxix. 19. yet you ſee in one place he begs God to keep him from it, and in the other, he tells us he kept himſelf from it, and both ſhew he was not the ſervant of it.

5. *Fifthly*, Though both may ſin againſt knowledge, yet it will not follow from thence, that therefore ſins againſt knowledge muſt

needs be ſins in dominion in the one, as they are in the other: there was too much light abuſed, and violence offered in David's deliberated ſin, as he confeſſes, Pſal. li. 6. and the ſad ſtory itſelf too plainly ſhews; and yet, in the main, David was an upright man ſtill; though this conſideration of the fact threwdly wounded his integrity, and ſtands upon record for a caution to all others.

SECT. VII.

WE have ſeen what doth not infer the dominion of ſin in the former particulars, being ſimply conſidered; I ſhall next ſhew you what doth, and how the ſincere and falſe hearts are diſtinguiſh- in this trial. And,

1. *Firſt*, Aſſent and conſent upon deliberation notes the ſoul to be under the dominion of ſin; when the mind approves ſin, and the will gives its plenary conſent to it, this ſets up ſin in its throne, and puts the ſoul into ſubjection to it; for the dominion of ſin conſiſts in its authority over us, and our voluntary ſubjection to it. This you find to be the character of a wicked graceleſs perſon, Pſal. xxxvi. 4. "He deviſeth miſchief upon his bed; he ſetteth himſelf in a way that "is not good; he abhorreth not evil."

The beſt men may fall into ſin through miſtake, or precipitated into ſin through the violence of temptation; but to deviſe miſchief, and ſet himſelf in an evil way, this notes full aſſent of the mind; and then, *not to abhor evil*, notes full conſent of the will; and theſe two being given to ſin, not only antecedently to the acting of it, but alſo conſequently to it, to like it afterwards, as well as before; this puts the ſoul fully under the power of ſin; What can it give more?

This (as * one ſaith) in direct oppoſition to the apoſtle, Rom. xii. 1. is to preſent their bodies a dead ſacrifice, unholy, and abominable to God; acceptable to the devil, which is their unreaſonable ſervice: all men by nature are given to ſin, but theſe men give themſelves to it.

2. *Secondly*, The cuſtomary practice of ſin ſubjects the ſoul to the dominion of ſin; and ſo "he that is born of God doth not commit "ſin," 1 John iii. 9. Fall into ſin, yea, the ſame ſin he may, and that often; but then it is not without reluctance, repentance, and a proteſt entered by the ſoul in heaven againſt it; ſo that ſin hath not a quiet poſſeſſion of his ſoul; he is not the ſervant of ſin, nor doth he willingly walk after its commandments; but ſo do its own ſervants; it is their daily practice, Jer. ix. 3. "They proceed from "evil to evil."

3. *Thirdly*, Delight in ſin proves the dominion of ſin. So the ſervants of ſin are deſcribed, Iſa. lxvi. 3. "They have choſen their "own ways, and their ſoul delighteth in their abominations."

* Mr Caryl.

Look, as our delight in God is the meaſure of our holineſs, ſo our delight in ſin is the meaſure of our ſinfulneſs. Delight in ſin is the uppermoſt round of the ladder, and much higher the ſoul of a ſinner cannot go, till it be turned off into hell; "It is a ſport to a fool to do "miſchief," Prov. x. 23. Never merrier than when he hath the devil for his play-fellow, ſaith * one upon that place.

4. *Fourthly*, Impatience of Chriſt's yoke and government, argues the ſoul to be the ſubject of ſin. This is clear from the apoſtle's reaſoning in Rom. vi. 17, 18. "But God be thanked that ye were "the ſervants of ſin, but ye have obeyed from the heart the form "of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from "ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs." Where you ſee plainly, that no man can have his manumiſſion or freedom from ſin, that comes not into Chriſt's ſervice, and yields himſelf up to his obedience.

So then, to fret at Chriſt's laws, that tie us up from our luſts, to be weary of all ſpiritual employments as a burden intolerable, never to be in our element and centre till we are off from God, and plunging in the world and our luſts; this is a ſad note of a ſoul in ſubjection to ſin.

Object. *But may not an upright ſoul find ſome wearineſs in ſpiritual things?*

*Sol.* Doubtleſs he may, for he hath fleſh as well as ſpirit; and though the ſpirit be willing, the fleſh is weak: he is ſanctified but in part, and his delight in the law of God is but according to, or *after the inner-man*, Rom. vii. 22. But he ſees another law in his members, i. e. contrary inclinations. However, if he be weary ſometimes in the duties of godlineſs, to be ſure he is more weary out of them, and is not centered and at reſt till he be with his God again: but the carnal heart is where it would be, when it is in the ſervice of ſin; and as a fiſh upon dry land, when engaged in ſpiritual duties; eſpecially ſuch as are ſecret, and have no external allurements of reputation to engage him to them.

But what ſurpriſals or captivities to ſin ſoever may befal an upright ſoul, yet it appears by theſe eight following particulars, that he is not the ſervant of ſin, nor in full ſubjection to it. For,

1. *Firſt*, Though he may be drawn to ſin, yet he cannot reflect upon his ſin without ſhame and ſorrow; which plainly ſhews it to be an involuntary ſurprize. So Peter wept bitterly, Matth. xxvi. 75. And David mourned for his ſin heartily. Others can fetch new pleaſures out of their old ſins, by reflecting on them; and ſome can glory in their ſhame, Phil. iii. 19. ſome are ſtupid and ſenſeleſs after ſin; and the ſorrow of a carnal heart for it, is but a morning dew: but it is far otherwiſe with God's people.

2. *Secondly*, Though a ſaint may be drawn to ſin, yet it is not with

* Mr Trap.

a deliberate and full consent of his will; their delight is in the law of God, Rom. vii. 22. "They do that which they would not," ver. 16. i. e. there are inward dislikes from the new nature: and as for that case of David, which seems to have so much of counsel and deliberation in it, yet it was but in a single act; it was not in the general course of his life; he was upright in all things, i. e. in the general course and tenor of his life, 1 Kings xv. 5.

3. *Thirdly*, Though an upright soul may fall into sin, yet he is restless and unquiet in that condition, like a bone out of joint; and that speaks him to be none of sin's servants; as, on the contrary, if a man be engaged in the external duties of religion, and be restless, and unquiet there, his heart is not in it, he is not at rest till he be again in his earthly business; this man cannot be reckoned Christ's servant: a gracious heart is much after that rate employed in the work of sin, that a carnal heart is employed in the work of religion. That is a good rule, *Ea tantum dicunter inesse, quæ insunt per modum quietis:* That is a man's true temper, wherein he is at rest. Poor David fell into sin, but he had no rest in his bones because of it, Psalm li. 10, 11, 12: If his heart be off from God and duty for a little while, yet he recollects himself, and saith, as Psal. cxvi. 7. "Return to thy rest, O my soul."

4. *Fourthly*, Though a sincere Christian fall into sin and commit evil; yet he proceeds not from evil to evil, as the ungodly do, Jer. ix. 3. but makes his fall into one sin a caution to prevent another sin. Peter by his fall got establishment for the time to come. If God will speak peace to them, they are careful to return no more to folly; Psalm lxxxv. 8. "In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what "carefulness it wrought? Yea, what fear?" 2 Cor. vii. 11. It is not so with the servants of sin, one sin leaves them much more disposed to another sin.

5. *Fifthly*, A sincere Christian may be drawn to sin, but yet he would be glad with all his heart to be rid of sin; it would be more to him than thousands of gold and silver, that he might grieve and offend God no more; and that shews sin is not in dominion over him: he that is under the dominion of sin, is loth to leave his lusts. Sin's servants are not willing to part with it, they hold it fast, and refuse to let it go, as that text expresseth it, Jer. viii. 5. But the great complaint of the upright is expressed by the apostle according to the true sense of their hearts, in Rom. vii. 24. "Who shall deliver me "from the body of this death?"

6. *Sixthly*, It appears they yield not themselves willingly to obey sin, inasmuch as it is the matter of their joy when God orders any providence to prevent sin in them: "Blessed be the Lord, (said Da-"vid to Abigail) and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou that "hast kept me this day from shedding blood," 1 Sam. xv. 32, 33.

Here is blessing upon blessing for a sin-preventing providence. The author is blessed, the instrument blessed, the means blessed. O it is

a bleſſed thing in the eyes of a ſincere man to be kept from ſin! he reckons it a great deliverance, a very happy eſcape, if he be kept from ſin.

7. *Seventhly*, This ſhews that ſome who may be drawn to commit ſin, yet are none of the ſervants of ſin, that they do heartily beg the aſſiſtance of grace to keep them from ſin: "Keep back thy ſervant "from preſumptuous ſins," (ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſalm xix. 13.) "let "them not have dominion over me;" q. d. Lord, I find propenſions to ſin in my nature, yea, and ſtrong ones too; if thou leave me to myſelf, I am carried into ſin as eaſily as a feather down the torrent. "O Lord, keep back thy ſervant." And there is no petition that upright ones pour out their hearts to God in, either more frequently or more ardently than in this, to be kept back from ſin.

8. *Eighthly, and Laſtly*, This ſhews the ſoul not to be under the dominion of ſin, that it doth not only cry to God to be kept back from ſin, but uſes the means of prevention himſelf; he reſiſts it, as well as prays againſt it; Pſalm xviii. 23. "I was alſo upright before "him, and kept myſelf from mine iniquity:" So Job xxxi. 1. "I "have made a covenant with mine eyes;" and yet more fully in Iſa. xxxiii. 15. "He ſhaketh his hands from holding bribes, and "ſtoppeth his ears from hearing blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from "ſeeing evil." See with what care the portals are ſhut at which ſin uſeth to enter. All theſe things are very relieving conſiderations to poor ſouls queſtioning their integrity under the frequent ſurpriſals of ſin. And the next trial no leſs.

SECT. VIII.

(5.) FIFTHLY, Our oppoſition to, and conflicts with ſin diſcover what we are, gold or droſs.

There are conflicts with ſin in both the regenerate, and in the unregenerate; but there is a vaſt difference betwixt them, as will appear in the following account.

1. *Firſt*, There is an univerſal, and there is a particular oppoſition to ſin: the former is found in regenerate, the latter in unregenerate ſouls: a gracious heart hates every falſe way, Pſal. cxix. 104. and muſt needs do ſo, becauſe he hates and oppoſes ſin as ſin; ſo that he can have no *peccatum in deliciis*, no excepted or reſerved luſt, but fights againſt the whole body, and every limb and member of the body of ſin.

But it is not ſo with the hypocrite or carnal profeſſor; he hath overcome ſome reſerved ſin, that he cannot part with.

2. *Secondly*, There is an oppoſition betwixt the new nature and ſin, and there is an oppoſition betwixt a natural conſcience and ſin; the former is the caſe of an upright ſoul, the latter may be a ſelf-deceiver.

A regenerate perſon oppoſeth ſin becauſe there is an irreconcileable

antipathy betwixt it and the new nature in him, as is clear from Gal. v. 17. "The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the "fleſh; and theſe are contrary the one to the other." By fleſh, underſtand corrupt nature; by ſpirit, not only the ſpirit of man but the Spirit of God, or principle of regeneration in man. By the luſting of theſe two againſt each other, underſtand the deſire and endeavours of each other's deſtruction and ruin; and the ground of all this is the contrariety of all theſe two natures.

Theſe are contrary one to the other; there is a twofold oppoſition betwixt them, one formal, their very natures are oppoſite; the other effective, their workings and deſigns are oppoſite, as it is betwixt fire and water.

But the oppoſition found in unrenewed ſouls againſt ſin, is not from their natures, for ſin is ſuitable enough to that; but from the light that is in their minds and conſciences, which ſcares and terrifies them. Such was that in Darius, Dan. vi. 14. "He was ſore "diſpleaſed with himſelf, and ſet his heart on Daniel to deliver "him; and laboured till the going down of the ſun to deliver him." Here the conteſt was betwixt ſenſe of honour upon one ſide, and conviction of conſcience on the other ſide.

Sometimes a generous and noble diſpoſition oppoſes ſordid and baſe actions: *Major ſum, et ad majora natus; quam ut corporis mei ſim mancipium.* I am greater, and born to greater things, than that I ſhould be a ſlave to my body, ſaid a brave heathen.

3. *Thirdly*, There is a permanent, and there is a tranſient oppoſition to ſin; the former is the caſe of God's people, the latter of temporary and unſound profeſſors.

The ſaint when he draws the ſword in this warfare againſt ſin, throws away the ſcabbard; no end of this combat with ſin till life end; their life and their troubles are finiſhed together; 2 Tim. iv. 7. "I have fought the good fight, and have finiſhed my courſe."

But in other men it is but a tranſient quarrel; out with ſin one day, and in another; and the reaſon is plain by what was noted before; it is not the oppoſition of two natures; it is like the oppoſition of the wind and tide, theſe may be contrary and make a ſtormy ſea to-day, but the wind may come about, and go as the tide goes to-morrow; but in a Chriſtian it is the oppoſition of the river and the dam, one muſt give way to the other, there is no reconciling them; but the other "like the dog, returns to his vomit," 2 Pet. ii. ult.

4. *Fourthly*, There is an oppoſition to the root of ſin, and an oppoſition to the fruits of ſin. A gracious ſoul oppoſeth root and fruit, but others the latter only. The great deſign of an upright ſoul is not only to lop off this or that branch, but to kill the root of ſin, which is in his nature; Rom. vii. 24. "Who ſhall deliver me from the bo-"dy of this death?" But the great care and endeavours of others is to ſuppreſs outward acts of ſin, and eſcape the miſchievous conſequences of it: Yea, their ſtudy is, as Lactantius phraſeth it, *Potius*

*abſcondere, quam abſcindere vitia:* To hide, rather than to kill their luſts.

5. *Fifthly*, There is an oppoſition to ſin *in the ſtrength of God*, and an oppoſition to ſin in our own ſtrength; the former is proper to real Chriſtians, the latter is found frequently with unſanctified perſons; when a Chriſtian goes forth againſt any ſin, it is in the ſtrength of God: ſo you read their rule directs them, Eph. vi. 10. "Be ſtrong in the "Lord, and in the power of his might: take unto you the whole "armour of God:" And ſuitably, you ſhall find them frequently upon their knees begging ſtrength from heaven againſt their luſts; 2 Cor. xii. 8. "For this cauſe I beſought the Lord thrice," ſaith Paul, i. e. often and earneſtly, that the temptation might depart from him.

But others go forth againſt ſin only in the ſtrength of their own reſolutions; ſo did Pendleton in our ſtory; theſe reſolutions, or vows, which they have put themſelves under, are as frequently fruſtrated as made.

6. *Sixthly*, There is a ſucceſsful oppoſition to ſin, and an oppoſition that comes to nothing: The former is that of true Chriſtians, the latter is found among unregenerate men.

The work of mortification in the ſaints is progreſſive and increaſing: Hence Rom. vi. 6. "Our old man is crucified with him, that "the body of ſin might be deſtroyed." Sin dies in believers much as crucified perſons uſe to die, viz. a ſlow, lingering, gradual, but ſure death; its vigour and life expires by degrees, or as a conſumptive perſon dies; for to that alſo he alludes here: There is a diſeaſe, which is called *conſumptio totius*, a conſumption of the whole; and thoſe that die of that diſeaſe, languiſh more and more, till at laſt they drop *ſenſim ſine ſenſu*, by imperceptible degrees and ſteps into the grave.

But in the unregenerate, whatever conflicts they have with ſin, no corruption falls before it: It may be ſaid of them, as the church in another caſe complains of herſelf, Iſa. xxvi. 18. "We have been "in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth wind. We have not "wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants "of the world fallen." So it fares with theſe profeſſors; they pray, they hear, they vow, they reſolve, but when all is done, their luſts are as ſtrong and vigorous as ever: No degree of mortification appears after all.

And thus much of the trial of our ſincerity by our carriage towards ſin.

## CHAP. VII.

*Shewing what proof or trial is made of the ſoundneſs, or unſoundneſs of our graces by the duties of religion which we perform.*

### SECT. I.

WE now come (according to the method propoſed) to make trial of the truth or falſeneſs of grace, by the duties we daily perform in religion. And certainly they alſo have the uſe and efficacy of fire for the diſcovery, 1 John ii. 4, 5. "He that ſaith I "know him, and keepeth not his commandments [is a liar] and the "truth is not in him: But whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is "the love of God perfected: And hereby know we that we are in "him."

This is a practical lie, of which the apoſtle ſpeaks here; by which men deceive others for a while, and themſelves for ever; a lie not ſpoken, but done, when a man's courſe of life contradicts his profeſſion. The life of an hypocrite is but one longer or continued lie; he ſaith or profeſſeth he knows God, but takes no care at all to obey him in the duties he commands; he either neglects them, or if he performs them, it is not as God requires: "If they draw nigh to him "with their lips, yet their heart is far from him," Iſa. xxix. 13. "Thou art near in their mouth, but far from their reins," Jer. xii. 2.

There are ſome that feel the influence and power of their communion with the Lord in duties, going down into their very reins: And there are others whoſe lips and tongues only are touched with religion.

This is an age of light and much profeſſion: Men cannot now keep up a reputation in the ſober and profeſſing world, whilſt they let down, and totally neglect the duties of religion: but ſurely, if men would be but juſt to themſelves, their very performances of duty would tell them what their hearts are.

### SECT. II.

FOR there are, among others, theſe following particulars, that do very clearly difference the ſound from the unſound profeſſor.

1. *Firſt*, The deſigns and true levels and aims of men's hearts in duty will tell them what they are.

An hypocrite aims low; Hoſ. vii. 14. "They have not cried "unto me with their heart when they howled upon their beds; they "aſſemble themſelves for corn and wine, and they rebel againſt me." It is not Chriſt and pardon, for mortification and holineſs, but for corn and wine; thus they make a market of religion; all their ends in duty are either carnal, natural, or legal; either to accommodate their carnal ends, or ſatisfy and quiet their conſciences; and ſo their duties are performed as a ſin-offering to God.

But an upright heart hath very high and pure aims in duty; "The "deſire of their ſoul is to God," Iſa. xxvi. 8. "Their ſoul follows "hard after God," Pſal. lxiii. 8. "One thing have I deſired of the "Lord, that I will ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the "Lord all the days of my life, to ſee the beauty of the Lord, and to "enquire in his temple," Pſal. xxvii. 4. Theſe are the true eagles that play at the ſun, and will not ſtoop to low and earthly objects. Alas! if the enjoyment of God be miſſed in a duty, it is not the greateſt enlargement of gifts will ſatisfy; he comes back like a man that hath taken a long journey to meet his friend upon important buſineſs, and loſt his labour; his friend was not there.

2. *Secondly*, The engagements of men's hearts to God in duties will tell them what they are; the hypocrite takes little heed to his heart, Iſa. xxix. 13. They are not afflicted really for the hardneſs, deadneſs, unbelief and wanderings of their hearts in duty, as upright ones are; nor do they engage their hearts, and labour to get them up with God in duty, as his people do. "I have intreated thy fa-"vour with my whole heart," ſaith David, Pſal. cxix. 58. They are not pleaſed in duty until they feel their hearts ſtand towards God like a bow in its full bent. I ſay, it is not always ſo with them; what would they give that it might be ſo? But, ſurely, if their ſouls in duty be empty of God, they are filled with trouble and ſorrow.

3. *Thirdly*, The conſcience that men make of ſecret, as well as public duties, will tell them what their hearts and graces are; whether true or falſe. A vain profeſſor is curious in the former, and either negligent, or, at beſt, formal in the latter; for he finds no inducements of honour, applauſe, or oſtentation of gifts, externally moving him to them; nor hath he any experience of the ſweetneſs and benefit of ſuch duties internally to allure and engage his ſoul to them.

The hypocrite therefore is not for the cloſet, but the ſynagogue, Matth. vi. 5, 6. Not but that education, example, or the impulſe of conſcience, may ſometimes drive him thither; but it is not his daily delight to be there; his meat and drink to retire from the clamour of the world to enjoy God in ſecret. It is the obſervation of their duties is the great inducement to theſe men to perform them; and, *verily*, ſaith our Lord, ver. 2. "they have their reward," απεχουσι, they have it away, or they have carried off all the benefit and advantage that ever they ſhall have by religion. Much good may it do them with their applauſe and honour, let them make much of that airy reward, for it is all that ever they ſhall have.

But now for a ſoul truly gracious, he cannot long ſubſiſt without ſecret prayer. It is true, there is not always an equal freedom and delight, a like enlargement and comfort in thoſe retirements; but yet he cannot be without them; he finds the want of his ſecret, in his public duties; If he and his God have not met in ſecret, and had

ſome communion in the morning, he ſenſibly finds it in the deadneſs and unprofitableneſs of his heart and life all the day after.

4. *Fourthly*, The ſpirituality of our duties tries the ſincerity of our graces: An unregenerate heart is carnal, whilſt engaged in duties that are ſpiritual. Some men deceive themſelves in thinking they are ſpiritual men, becauſe their employments and calling is about ſpiritual things, Hoſea ix. 7. This indeed gives them the denomination, but not the frame of ſpiritual men; and others judge themſelves ſpiritual perſons, becauſe they frequently perform and attend upon ſpiritual duties: But, alas, the heart and ſtate may be carnal notwithſtanding all this. O, my friends, it is not enough that the object of your duties be ſpiritual, that they reſpect an holy God; nor that the matter be ſpiritual, that you be converſant about holy things; but the frame of your heart muſt be ſpiritual; an heavenly temper of ſoul is neceſſary, and what are the moſt heavenly duties without it?

The end and deſign you aim at muſt be ſpiritual, the enjoyment of God, and a growing conformity to him in holineſs; elſe multiply duties as the ſand on the ſea-ſhore, and they all will not amount to one evidence of your ſincerity. "God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve "with my ſpirit," ſaith the apoſtle, Rom. i. 9. He ſeems to appeal to God in this matter. I ſerve God in my ſpirit, and God knows that I do ſo; I dare appeal to him that it is ſo; he knows that my heart is with him, or would be with him in my duties: The arms of my faith do either ſenſibly graſp, or are ſtretched out towards him in my duties. O how little favour do gracious hearts find in the moſt excellent duties, if God and their ſouls do not ſenſibly meet in them!

Certainly, reader, there is a time when God comes nigh to men in duty, when he deals familiarly with men, and ſenſibly fills their ſouls with unuſual powers and delights. The near approaches of God to their ſouls are felt by them, (for ſouls have their ſenſes as well as bodies) and now are their minds abſtracted and marvellouſly refined from all that is material and earthly, and ſwallowed up in ſpiritual excellencies and glories.

Theſe are the real prelibations, or foretaſtes of glory, which no man can by words, make another to underſtand, as he himſelf doth that feels them.

Theſe ſeaſons, I confeſs, do but rarely occur to the beſt of Chriſtains, nor continue long when they do:* Alas! this wine is too ſtrong for ſuch weak bottles as we are. 'Hold, Lord, (an holy man 'ſaid once,) it is enough, thy poor creature is a clay veſſel, and can 'hold no more:' This is that joy unſpeakable, and full of glory, which is mentioned, 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. Something that words cannot

* It is a ſweet hour, and it is but an hour, (a thing of ſhort continuance:) The reliſh of it is exceeding ſweet, but it is not often that Chriſtians taſte it. *Bernard.*

deſcribe. Theſe ſeaſons are the golden ſpots of our lives, when we are admitted to theſe near and ineffable views and taſtes of God: Poſſibly ſome poor Chriſtians can ſay but little to theſe things; their ſorrows are exerciſed in duties more than their joys; they are endeavouring to mount, but the ſtone hangs at the heel; they eſſay, but cannot riſe to that height that others do, who are got up by their labouring faith into the upper region, and there diſplay their wings, and ſing in the ſun-beams: But though they cannot reach this height, yet have they no ſatisfaction in duties wherein there is no intercourſe betwixt God and their ſouls.

That which contents another, will not content a chriſtian. If the king be abſent, men will bow to the empty chair; but if God be abſent, an empty duty gives no ſatisfaction to a gracious ſpirit. The pooreſt Chriſtian is found panting after God by ſincere deſires, and labouring to get up that dead and vain heart to God in duty, (though, alas! it is many times but the rolling of the returning ſtone againſt the hill) yet he never expects advantage by that duty wherein the Spirit of God is not; nor doth he expect the Spirit of God ſhould be where his own ſpirit is not.

5. *Fifthly*, Aſſiduity and conſtancy in the duties of religion make a notable diſcovery of the ſoundneſs or rottenneſs of men's hearts. The hypocrite may ſhew ſome zeal and forwardneſs in duties for a time, but he will jade and give out at length; Job xxvii. 10. "Will "he delight himſelf in the Almighty? Will he always call upon "God?" No, he will not. If his motions in religion were natural, they would be conſtant; but they are artificial, and he is moved by external inducements, and ſo muſt needs be off and on; he prays himſelf weary of praying, and hears himſelf weary of hearing: His heart is not delighted in his duties, and therefore his duties muſt needs grow ſtale and dry to him after a while. There be three ſeaſons in which the zeal of an hypocrite may be inflamed in duties.

*Firſt*, When ſome imminent danger threatens him; ſome ſmart rod of God is ſhaken over him; "When he ſlew them, then they "ſought him, and returned and enquired early after God," Pſalm lxxviii. 34. O the goodly words they give, the fair promiſes they make! and yet all the while "they do but flatter him with "their lips, and lie unto him with their tongues," ver. 36, 37. for let but that danger paſs over, and the heavens clear up again, and he will reſtrain prayer, and return to his old courſe again.

*Secondly*, When the times countenance and favour religion, and the wind is in his back, O what zeal will he have for God! So in the ſtony ground, Matth. xiii. 5. the ſeed ſprung up and flouriſhed until the ſun of perſecution aroſe, and then it faded away, for it had no depth of earth, no deep ſolid inward work or principle of grace to maintain it.

*Thirdly*, When ſelf ends and deſigns are accommodated and promoted by theſe things. This was the caſe of Jehu, 2 Kings x. 16.

" Come, ſee my zeal;" for what? For a baſe ſelf-intereſt, not for God. How fervently will ſome men pray, preach, and profeſs, whilſt they ſenſibly feel the incomes and profits of theſe duties to their fleſh; whilſt they are admired and applauded!

Theſe external incentives will put an hypocrite into an hot fit of zeal; but then, as it is with a man, whoſe colours are raiſed by the heat of the fire, and not by the healthfulneſs of a good conſtitution, it ſoon fades and falls again.

But, bleſſed be God, it is not ſo with all: The man whoſe heart is upright with his God, will " keep judgment, and do righteouſneſs " at all times," Pſal. cvi. 3. Whether dangers threaten or no; whether the times favour religion or no; whether his earthly intereſt be promoted by it or no, he will be holy ſtill, he will not part with his duties when they are ſtript naked of thoſe external advantages; as the addition of theſe things to religion did not at firſt engage him, ſo the ſubtraction of them cannot diſengage him.

If his duty become his reproach, yet Moſes will not forſake it, Heb. xi. 26. If he loſe his company, and be left alone, yet Paul will not flinch from his duty, 2 Tim. iv. 16. If hazard ſurround duty on every ſide, yet Daniel will not quit it, Dan. vi. 10. for they conſidered theſe things at firſt, and counted the coſt; they ſtill find religion is rich enough to pay the coſt of all that they can loſe, or ſuffer for its ſake; yea, and that with an hundred-fold reward now in this life. They never had any other deſign in engaging in religious duties, but to help them to heaven; and if they recover heaven at laſt, whether the way to it prove better or worſe, they have their deſign and ends; and therefore they will be ſtedfaſt, " always abounding in the work " of the Lord, as knowing their labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. ult.

6. *Sixthly*, The humility and ſelf-denial of our hearts in duties, will try what they are for their integrity and ſincerity towards God. Doth a man boaſt in his own excellencies in prayer, as the Phariſee did, Luke xviii. 10, 11. " God, I thank thee, I am not as other men:" Which he ſpeaks not in an humble acknowledgment of the grace of God which differences man from man, but in a proud oſtentation of his own excellencies. Doth a man make his duties his ſaviours, and truſt to them in a vain confidence of their worth and dignity? Luke xviii. 9. Surely, " his heart, which is thus lifted up within him, is " not upright, Hab. ii. 4. But if the heart be upright indeed, it will expreſs its humility, as in all other things, ſo eſpecially in its duties wherein it approaches the great and holy God.

*Firſt*, It will manifeſt its humility in thoſe awful and reverential apprehenſions it hath of God, as Abraham did, Gen. xviii. 27. " And now, I that am but duſt and aſhes, (ſaith he) have taken up- " on me to ſpeak unto God." The humility of Abraham's ſpirit is, in ſome meaſure, to be found in all Abraham's children.

*Secondly*, In thoſe low and vile thoughts they have of themſelves

and their religious performances: Thus that poor penitent, Luke vii. 38. ſtood behind Chriſt weeping: "Yet the dogs eat the crumbs" ſaith another, Mark vii. 28. "I am more brutiſh than any man," ſaith a third, Prov. xxx. 7. "I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes," ſaith a fourth, Job xlii. 6. and as little eſteem they have for their performances, Iſa. lxiv. 6. "All our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags." I deny not but there is pride and vanity in the moſt upright ones; but what place ſoever it finds in their converſes with men, it finds little room in their converſes with God, or if it doth, they loath it, and themſelves for it.

*Thirdly*, But eſpecially their humility in duty is diſcovered in renouncing all their duties in point of dependence, and relying entirely upon Chriſt for righteouſneſs and acceptance: They have ſpecial regard to duties in point of obedience, but none at all in point of reliance.

7. *Seventhly*, The communion and intercourſe which is betwixt God and men in duties, notably diſcovers what their perſons and graces are. And it muſt needs do ſo, becauſe what communion ſoever the hypocrite hath with duties, or with ſaints in duties, to be ſure he hath none with God.

None can come nigh to God in duty, but thoſe that are made nigh by reconciliation: All ſpecial communion with Chriſt is founded in real union with Chriſt; but "the wicked are eſtranged from the "womb," Pſalm lviii. 3.

But now there is real communion betwixt God and his people in duties. Truly our fellowſhip, κοινωνια, our communion is with the Father and Son, 1 John i. 3. God pours forth of his Spirit upon them, and they pour forth their hearts to God. It is ſenſibly manifeſted to them when the Lord comes nigh to their ſouls in duty, and as ſenſible they are of his retreats and withdrawments from their ſouls, Cant. iii. 1, 4. They find their hearts, like the heliotrope, open and ſhut according to the acceſſes and receſſes of the divine preſence. They that never felt any thing of this nature, may call it a fancy, but the Lord's people are abundantly ſatisfied of the reality thereof.

Their very countenance is altered by it, 1 Sam. i. 18. the ſad and cloudy countenance of Hannah cleared up, there was fair weather in her face, as ſoon as ſhe knew ſhe had audience and acceptance with her God. I know all communion with God doth not conſiſt in joys and comforts; there is as real communion with God in the mortifying and humbling influences of his Spirit upon men, as in the cheering and refreſhing influences thereof. I know alſo there is a great diverſity in the degrees and meaſures thereof: It is not alike in all Chriſtians, nor with the ſame Chriſtian at all times. But that real Chriſtians have true and real communion with God in their duties, is a truth as manifeſt in ſpiritual ſenſe and experience of the ſaints, as their communion is one with another.

8. *Eightly*, Growth and improvement of grace in duties, notably

differences the ſound and the unſound heart. All the duties in the world will never make an hypocrite more holy, humble or heavenly than he is; but will, as the watering of a dry ſtick, ſooner rot it, than make it flouriſhing and fruitful. What was Judas the better for all thoſe heavenly ſermons, prayers, and diſcourſes of Chriſt which he heard? And what will thy ſoul be the better for all the duties thou performeſt weekly and daily, if thy heart be unſound? It is plain, from Job. xv. 4. there muſt be an implantation into Chriſt, before there can be an improvement in fruitful obedience. And it is as plain, from 1 John ii. 14. that the virtues of ordinances muſt remain; the efficacy and power that we ſometimes feel under them, muſt abide and remain in the heart afterwards, or we cannot grow, and be made fruitful by them.

But the falſe profeſſor is neither rooted in Chriſt by union with him, nor doth, or can retain the virtue of ordinances within him; but, like one that views his face in a glaſs, quickly forgets what manner of man he was; his head indeed may grow, his knowledge may increaſe, but he hath a dead and withered heart.

But as the ſaints have real communion with God in duties, ſo they do make improvements anſwerable thereunto: There is more certainly a ripening of their graces that way; a changing or gradual transformation from glory to glory; a ſpringing up to that full ſtature of the man in Chriſt. "They that are planted in the houſe of "the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the courts of our God," Pſal. xcii. 13, 14. There is pure and ſincere milk in the breaſts of ordinances; a believer ſucks the very breaſts of Chriſt in his duties, and doth grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. they do grow more and more judicious, experienced, humble, mortified, and heavenly, by converſing with the Lord ſo frequently in his appointments.

There is, I confeſs, a more diſcernible growth and ripening in ſome Chriſtians, than in others: The faith of ſome groweth exceedingly, 2 Theſſ. i. 3. others more ſlowly, Heb. v. 12. but yet there are improvements of grace in all upright ones: habits are more deeply radicated, or fruits of obedience more increaſed.

Object. *If any upright ſoul be ſtumbled at this, as not being able to diſcern the increaſe of his graces, after all his duties.*

*Sol.* Let ſuch conſider the growth of grace is diſcerned as the growth of plants is, which we perceive rather *creviſſe, quam creſcere*; to have grown, than to grow: Compare time paſt and preſent, and you may ſee it; but uſually our eager deſires after more, make us overlook what we have as nothing.

9. *Ninthly*, The aſſiſtances and influences of the Spirit in duties, ſhew us what we are; no vital ſanctifying influences can fall upon carnal hearts in duties: The Spirit helps not their infirmities, nor makes interceſſion for them with groanings which cannot be uttered, as he doth for his own people, Rom. viii. 26, 27. They have his aſſiſtances in the way of common *gifts*, but not in the way of ſpecial

grace: He may enable them to preach judiciously, not experimentally; to pray orderly and neatly, not feelingly, believingly, and brokenheartedly; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are "the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. He never so assists but where he hath first sanctified. Carnal men furnish the materials of their duties out of the strength of their parts; a strong memory, a good invention are the fountains which they draw.

But it is otherwise with souls truly gracious; they have ordinarily a threefold assistance from the Spirit in reference to their duties.

*First*, Before duties, exciting them to it, making them feel their need of it, like the call of an empty stomach; Psalm xxvii. 8. "Thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart answered, Thy face, Lord, "will I seek."

*Secondly*, In their duties, furnishing both matter and affection, as in that text lately cited, Rom. viii. 26. guiding them not only what to ask, but how to ask.

*Thirdly*, After their duties, helping them not only to suppress the pride and vanity of their spirits, but also to wait on God for the accomplishment of their desires.

Now, though all these thing, wherein the sincerity of our hearts is tried in duties, be found in great variety (as to degrees) among saints, yet they are mysteries unknown by experience to other men.

## CHAP. VIII.

*Opening the trials of sincerity and hypocrisy, by sufferings upon the account of religion.*

SECT. I.

WE are now arrived at the last trial of grace propounded, viz. by sufferings for religion.

Thousands of hypocrites embark themselves in the profession of religion in a calm; but if the wind riseth, and the sea rageth, and they see religion will not transport them safely to the cape of their earthly hopes and expectations, they desire to be landed again as soon as may be; for they never intended to ride out a storm for Christ: So you find, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. "He endureth for a while: but "when tribulation of persecution ariseth because of the word, by "and by he is offended."

But yet it is not every trial by sufferings that separates gold from dross; and therefore my business will be to shew,

1. *First*, When the fire of sufferings and persecutions is hot and vehement enough to separate them.

2. *Secondly*, Why it must needs discover hypocrisy when it is at that height.

3. *Thirdly*, What advantages ſincere grace hath to endure that ſevere and ſharp trial.

SECT. II.

1. NOW the fire of perſecution, or ſufferings for religion, may be judged intenſe, and high enough to ſeparate gold and droſs;

*Firſt*, When religion expoſes us to imminent hazard of our deepeſt and deareſt intereſts in this world: Such are our liberties, eſtates, and lives: Then it is a fierce and fiery trial indeed. Sometimes it expoſes the liberties of its profeſſors, Rev. ii. 10. "The de-"vil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon. Sometimes their eſtates, Heb. x. 34. ye took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods;" and ſometimes their lives, Heb. xi. 37. "They were ſtoned, they were ſawn "aſunder, they were ſlain with the ſword." Whilſt it goes no higher than ſome ſmall inconveniencies of life, reputation and ſenſe of honour will hold a falſe heart; but when it comes to this, few will be found able to endure it, but thoſe that expect to ſave no more by religion but their ſouls, and account themſelves in good caſe, if they can but ſave them with the loſs of all that is dear to them in this world.

Here the falſe heart boggles; here it uſually jades and faulters.

*Secondly*, The fiery trial is then high, when there remains no viſible hopes of deliverance, or outward encouragements to ſenſe, that the ſcene will alter. When "we ſee not our ſigns, there is no more "any prophet, nor any that can tell us how long," as the caſe with the church was, Pſal. lxxiv. 9. Then their hands hang down, and their hearts faint: Nor is it to be wondered at, when the length of troubles prove ſo ſore a temptation even to the upright, to put forth their hands to iniquity; as it is Pſal. cxxv. 3. If ſuch a temptation ſhake ſuch men as build on the rock, it muſt quite overturn thoſe whoſe foundation is but ſand.

*Thirdly*, When a falſe profeſſor is engaged alone in ſufferings, and is ſingled out from the herd, as a deer, to be run down, now it is a thouſand to one but he quits religion to ſave himſelf: Good company will encourage a faint-hearted traveller to jog on a great way; but if he be forſaken by all, as Paul was, no man to ſtand by him; if left alone, as Elijah was, what can encourage him to hold out?

Indeed, if they had the ſame inviſible ſupports thoſe good men had, that the Lord was with them, that would keep them ſteady; but wanting that encouragement from within, and all ſhrinking away from without, they quickly tire downright.

*Fourthly*, When near relations and intimates oppoſe and tempt us. The prophet ſpeaks of a time "when a man's enemies ſhall be the "men of his own houſe; it may be the wife of his boſom, Micah vii. 5, 6. O what a trial is that which Chriſt mentions in Luke xiv. 26. when we muſt hate father and mother, wife and children, or quit

claim to Chriſt and heaven! This is hard work indeed.

How hard did that truly noble and renowned Galeacius Carracciolus find this! O what a conflict found he in his bowels! Now Chriſt and our deareſt intereſt come to meet like two men upon a narrow bridge; if one go forward, the other muſt go back, and now the predominate intereſt can no longer be concealed.

*Fifthly*, When powerful temptations are mixed with cruel ſufferings; when we are ſtrongly tempted, as well as cruelly perſecuted: This blows up the fire to a vehement height. This was the trial of thoſe precious primitive believers, Heb. xi. 35, 37. "They were "ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, they were tempted." Here was life, liberty, and preferment ſet upon one hand, and death in the moſt formidable ſhape upon the other. This cannot but be a great trial to any, but eſpecially when a cruel death and tender temper meet, then the trial goes high indeed.

SECT. III.

2. AND that ſuch ſufferings as theſe will diſcover the falſeneſs and rottenneſs of men's hearts, cannot be doubted: If you conſider that this is the fire deſigned by God, for this very uſe and purpoſe, to ſeparate the gold from the droſs; ſo you will find it, 1 Pet. iv. 12. "Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery "trial which is to try you," i. e. the very deſign and aim of providence in permitting and ordering them, is to try you. The deſign of Satan is to deſtroy you; but God's deſign is to try you. Upon this account you find the hour of perſecution (in a ſuitable notion) called "the hour of temptation or probation," Rev. iii. 10. for then profeſſors are ſifted to the very bran; ſearched to the very bottom principles. "This is the day that burns as an oven, in which all the "proud, and all that do wickedly, ſhall be as ſtubble," Mal. iv. 1. For,

1. *Firſt*, In that day the predominant intereſt muſt appear, and be diſcovered: It can be concealed no longer; "No man can ſerve two "maſters," ſaith Chriſt, Luke xvi. 13. A man may ſerve many maſters, if they all command the ſame things, or things ſubordinate to each other; but he cannot ſerve two maſters, if their commands claſh and interfere with each other: And ſuch are the commands of Chriſt and the fleſh in a ſuffering hour. Chriſt ſaith, "Be thou "faithful to the death;" the fleſh ſaith, *Spare thyſelf*, and ſecure the comforts of life. Chriſt ſaith, "He that loveth father or mo-"ther, wife or children, lands or inheritance more than me, is not "worthy of me." Fleſh ſaith, *He that will grieve and break the heart of ſuch dear relations, and forſake, when he might keep ſuch earthly accommodations, is not worthy of them.*

Thus the two intereſts come in full oppoſition: and now have but patience to wait a little, and you ſhall diſcern which is predominant. A dog follows two men, while they both walk one way, and

you know not which of the two is his maſter; ſtay but a little till their path parts, and then you ſhall quickly ſee who is his maſter: So is it in this caſe.

2. *Secondly*, In that day ſenſible ſupports fail, and all a man's relief comes in by the pure and immediate actings of faith; and were it not for thoſe reliefs, his heart would ſoon faint and die away under diſcouragements, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. "We faint not whilſt we look "not at the things which are ſeen, for they are temporal, but at the "things which are not ſeen, for they are eternal," q. d. If we keep not our eye intently fixed upon the inviſible and eternal things in the coming world, we ſhall feel ourſelves fainting and dying away under the many troubles and afflictions of this world. "I had fainted "(ſaith holy David) if I had not believed." How then ſuppoſe ye ſhall the hypocrite live at ſuch a time, who hath no faith to ſupport him? No relief but what comes in through the ſenſes?

3. *Thirdly*, In that day all mere notions and ſpeculations about religion vaniſh; and nothing relieves and ſatisfies the ſuffering ſoul but what it really believes, and what it hath ſatisfying proof and experience of in himſelf. There are a great many pretty and pleaſing notions which our minds are entertained with; ſome delight in times of peace, which can do us no ſervice at all in the day of trouble! and for your ſpeculative, unpracticable knowledge of the greateſt truths in religion, as little ſervice is to be expected from them: Except we have better evidence and ſecurity about them, we ſhall be loth to venture all upon the credit of them.

That is a very conſiderable paſſage to this purpoſe in Heb. x. 34. "Ye took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, (knowing in yourſelves) "that ye have in heaven a better and more enduring ſubſtance." This *knowing in yourſelves* is by inward and ſenſible experience, taſte and feeling, which is abundantly ſatisfying to the ſoul; and ſtands oppoſed to all that traditional knowledge we receive from others; which, as it leaves the mind fluctuating, ſo the heart alſo dead and comfortleſs.

4. *Fourthly*, In that day the root and foundation of a man's faith and hope is tried, and then they that have built upon the ſand muſt needs fail; for every thing is as its foundation; principles are to us what a root is to a tree, or a foundation to a houſe; a flaw or grand defect there moſt aſſuredly ruins all. This we find to be the very ſcope of thoſe two famous parables, Luke xiv. 25. and Matth. xiii. 21. Leſſer troubles ſhake but the branches, but theſe try the very root: if nothing be found there but ſelf-ends; the force of education, and the influence of examples, ſurely when the winds riſe high, and beat upon it, they will quickly lay the loftieſt profeſſor even with the ground.

And thus you ſee what a criſis an hour of temptation, the ſuffering hour is, and what diſcoveries of hypocriſy it muſt needs make; for

now the hypocrite, like Orpah, will forſake religion; but ſincerity will make the ſoul cleave to it, as Ruth did to Naomi.

SECT. IV.

3. WHAT advantages ſincerity gives the ſoul for its eſtabliſhment and perſeverance in ſuffering times, I ſhall briefly account for in the following particulars.

1. *Firſt*, Sincere godlineſs dethrones that idol, the love of this world, in all true Chriſtians; and this is it that makes men ſhrink and flinch from Chriſt in a day of ſuffering. I do not deny but even believers themſelves love the world too much; but they love it not as their chief good: it is not their portion or happineſs; if any man ſo love the world, "the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. How much ſoever a ſincere Chriſtian loves the world, yet ſtill it is in ſubordination to the love of God, John xxi. 15. Sincerity can conſiſt with no other love of the world; it will not ſuffer ſuch a curſed plant to grow under its ſhadow.

Now, what is it, but this inordinate, ſupreme love of the creature, that makes men forſake Chriſt in time of temptation? This was the ruin of that young man, Matth. xix. 22. "He went away ſorrowful, "for he had great poſſeſſions." This was the overthrow of Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10. "He hath forſaken me (ſaith the apoſtle) having "loved this preſent world." The love of this world, like ſap in green wood, will not ſuffer you to burn for Chriſt; get but the heart mortified to the creature by a diſcovery of better things in heaven, and it will eſtabliſh and fix your ſpirits, that it ſhall not be in the power of creatures to ſhake you off from Chriſt your foundation.

2. *Secondly*, Sincerity knits the ſoul to Chriſt, and union with him ſecures us in the greateſt trials; *Minimur quatenus unimur*. The hypocrite having no union with Chriſt, can have no communion with him, nor communications of grace from him; and ſo that little ſtock of his own being quickly ſpent (I mean natural courage and reſolution) and no incomes from Chriſt, he muſt needs give up in a ſhort time. But it is with a believer in a day of trouble, as it is with a garriſon beſieged by land, but free and open to the ſea, whence freſh ſupplies are daily ſent in to relieve it: See 2 Cor. i. 5. "As the "ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo abound-"eth by Chriſt;" freſh aids and daily ſupplies proportionable to our expences and decays of ſtrength: So Col. i. 11. "Strengthened "with all might in the inner-man, according to his glorious power, "unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs." And this is the believers great advantage by his union with Chriſt in a day of trial.

3. *Thirdly*, As ſincerity unites the ſoul with Chriſt, ſo it ſets the heart upon heaven, and things eternal; Col. iii. 1. *&c.* Surely nothing is more conducive to our ſtability than this, in the hour of temptation.

This is the moſt effectual preſervative from temptations upon the right hand, and upon the left. Moſes could caſt a kingdom at his

heels; deſpiſe the riches, pleaſures, and honours of Egypt, whilſt his eye was fixed upon him that is inviſible, and had reſpect to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. And it was a brave reply of the forty martyrs to Valence the emperor, tempting them with the preferments and honours of the world, 'Why offer ye theſe 'trifles to us, when you know how the whole world is contemned 'by us?' And for temptations on the left hand, how little can they move that ſoul, who realizes the glory of the approaching world, and ſees the afflictions and ſufferings of this world preparing him for, and haſtening him to the enjoyment of it: temptations meet with but cold entertainment from ſuch ſouls.

4. *Fourthly*, Sincerity drives but one deſign, and that is to pleaſe and enjoy God: and what can more eſtabliſh and fix the ſoul in the hour of temptation than this? The reaſon why the hypocrite is unſtable in all his ways, is given us by the apoſtle James, i. 8. He is a double-minded man, δίψυχος ανηρ, a man of two ſouls in one body; as a profane wretch once boaſted, that he had one ſoul for God, and another for any thing. But all the deſigns of a gracious heart are united in one; and ſo the entire ſtream of his affections runs ſtrong.

It is baſe by-ends and ſelf-intereſts, that, like a great many ditches cut out of the bank of a river, draw away the ſtream out of its proper channel, and make its waters fail. But if the heart be united for God, as the expreſſion is, Pſalm lxxxvi. 11. then we may ſay of ſuch a Chriſtian as was ſaid of a young Roman, *Quicquid vult, valde vult*; What he doth is done with all his might. And this was the ground of that ſaying, *Liberet me Deus ab homine unius tantum negotii*: A man of one only deſign, puts to all his ſtrength to carry it; nothing can ſtand before him.

5. *Fifthly*, Sincerity brings a man's will into ſubjection to the will of God; and this being done, the greateſt danger and difficulty is over with ſuch a man. This is that holy oil which makes the wheels of the ſoul run nimbly, even in difficult paths of obedience; *Non tardat uncta rota*. Let but a man be once brought to that, "The will "of the Lord be done," as it is Acts xxi. 13. to ſee the higheſt reaſon of cheerful obedience in the holy, juſt, and good will of God, and then all the difficulty is over; he can ſuffer quietly what men inflict unjuſtly.

6. *Sixthly*, Sincerity takes its meaſures of preſent things by the rules of faith and eternity; it goes not by the ſame reckoning and account that others do, who judge of things by ſenſe, and the reſpects they have to the preſent world, 2 Cor. iv. 18. "We look not at the "things that are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen;" and this is there given as the reaſon of his not fainting under preſent difficulties: So, Rom. viii. 18. "I reckon that the ſufferings of the preſent "times are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall "be revealed in us." He will not allow himſelf to undervalue eternal glory, by once mentioning preſent ſufferings, in a way of bemoan-

ing himſelf for them: A ſteady eye upon the other world makes us more than conquerors over the troubles of this world.

7. *Seventhly*, To conclude; ſincerity alone hath all the heavenly aids and aſſiſtances to ſtability, and perſeverance in ſuffering times: upright ones (and ſuch only) have Chriſt's interceſſion in heaven for them, Rom. viii. 34. The Spirit's conſolation in all their troubles, 1 Pet. iv. 14. The Spirit of glory and of God reſteth on them: the beneficial miniſtry of angels, who are ſent forth upon their account, Heb. i. 14. *A ſtock of prayers*, going up for them all the world over, Eph. vi. 18. Multitudes of precious promiſes in the ſcriptures; for every line, word, and ſyllable of which the faithfulneſs of God ſtands engaged: ſo that it is impoſſible ſuch gold can periſh in the fire.

And thus of the ſeveral ways by which grace is here tried.

## CHAP. IX.

*Opening the deſigns and ends of God, in bringing the profeſſors of religion into ſuch various trials of their graces in this world.*

### SECT. I.

THESE are ſome of the ways and methods in which God brings his gold to the touchſtone, and to the fire, even in this world, before the awful and ſolemn trial they muſt come to in the final judgment: and if we deſire to be ſatisfied what the deſign or end of God in making ſuch probations of his people is,

We muſt conclude, in the general, he certainly deſigns his own glory, and his people's advantage and profit in them. If he ſuffer them to be tried by reproaches, *happy are they, the Spirit of God and of glory reſteth on them*; there is their profit; and though his name be evil ſpoken of, yet in the meekneſs of their ſpirits *he is glorified*, as it is, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "If the ſcourge ſlay ſuddenly, he laugheth at the "trial of the innocent," Job ix. 23. Not at their afflictions, but at the effects and bleſſed iſſues and reſults of them: Not that it gives them pain, but that it gives them glory. Upon this account the apoſtle bids us count it all joy when we fall into diverſe temptations or trials: and ſtill the more trials the more joy; for thereby God will produce ſuch effects as are more precious than gold that periſheth, 1 Pet. i. 7. O who can value the comfort that is taſted by the ſoul upon the trial and diſcovery of its ſincerity, when after ſome ſore temptation wherein God hath helped us to maintain our integrity, or after ſome cloſe pinching affliction, wherein we have diſcovered in ourſelves a ſweet reſignation to, and contentment in the will of God, an heart cleaving to the Lord, purged and made more ſpiritual under the rod! we can turn to the Lord, and appeal to him, as the

prophet did, Jer. xii. 3. "But thou, O Lord, knoweſt me; thou "haſt ſeen me, and tried mine heart towards thee."

I ſay, who can duly value ſuch an advantage: who would exchange ſuch a comfort for all the gold and ſilver in the world? How many trials ſoever God brings his people under, to be ſure neither his own glory nor their intereſt ſhall ſuffer any damage by them.

SECT. II.

BUT more particularly, let us bring our thoughts cloſe to the matter before us, and we ſhall find many great advantages and benefits riſing out of theſe trials of ſincerity: For,

1. *Firſt*, Hereby hypocriſy is unmaſked and diſcovered; the vizard is plucked off from the falſe profeſſor, and his true natural face and complexion ſhewn to the world; and in this there is a great deal of good.

Object. *Good, you will ſay, Where lies it? All the world ſees the miſchief and ſad effects of it; many are ſtumbled, many are hardened by it:* "Woe to the world becauſe of offences!" Matth. xvi. 7.

*Sol.* True, ſome are prejudiced and hardened by it, ſo as never to have good thoughts of the ways and people of God more: That is ſad indeed; however, therein God accompliſhes his word, and executeth his decree; and though theſe periſh, yet,

*Firſt*, Others are warned, awakened, and ſet a ſearching their own hearts more narrowly than ever, and this is good, 1 Cor. x. 11, 12. Now theſe were our examples; "wherefore let him that "thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall."

*Secondly*, Hereby ſin is aſhamed; and it is good when ſin that hath expoſed men to ſo much ſhame, ſhall be itſelf expoſed to ſhame: This is the juſt reward of ſin, Jer. xiii. 25, 26. "This is thy lot, "the portion of thy meaſures from me, ſaith the Lord; be-"cauſe thou haſt forgotten me, and truſted in falſehood, therefore "will I diſcover thy ſkirts upon thy face, that thy ſhame may ap-"pear."

The turning up the ſkirt is a modeſt expreſſion of expoſing a perſon to the greateſt ſhame in the day of trial: God by diſcovering hypocriſy, ſhames the hypocrite; and, ſurely, many ſuch diſcoveries are made of men at this day: We may ſee ſin, that lurked cloſe in the heart before, now laid open before all Iſrael, and before the ſun.

*Thirdly*, Hereby the poor ſelf-cozening hypocrite hath the greateſt opportunity and advantage that ever was before him in all his life, to recover himſelf out of the ſnare of the devil. Now all his pretences are gone; now that which like a ſhield was advanced againſt the arrows of reproof and conviction is gone; now a poor creature ſtands naked, and ſtripped out of all his pleas, as a fair and open mark to the world, and his own conſcience; and happy will it be for him, if now the Lord make conviction to enter point blank into his ſoul. All theſe are bleſſed effects of the diſcovery of hypocriſy.

*Secondly*, By theſe trials integrity is cleared up, and the doubts and fears of many upright and holy ones allayed and quieted, reſolved and ſatisfied.

O what would many a poor Chriſtian give for ſatisfaction in that great point of ſincerity! How many tears have been ſhed to God in ſecret upon that account? How many hours have been ſpent in examination of his own heart about it, and ſtill jealouſies and fears hang upon his heart? He doubts what he may prove at laſt. Well, ſaith God, let his ſincerity then come to the teſt, kindle the fire, and caſt in my gold. Trials are the high way to aſſurance; let my child ſee that he loves me more than theſe, that his heart is upright with me. I will try him by proſperity and by adverſity, by perſecutions and temptations, and he ſhall ſee his heart is better than he ſuſpects it to be. This ſhall be the day of reſolution to his fears and doubts.

The apoſtle ſpeaking of hereſies, 1 Cor. xi. 7, 9. puts a neceſſity upon them: *There muſt be hereſies*, ſaith he, *that they which are approved may be made manifeſt*. The ſame neceſſity there is (and for the ſame end) of all other trials of grace, that the lovely, beautiful, ſweet face of ſincerity may be opened ſometimes to the world, to enamour them, and to the ſoul in whom it is, to ſatisfy it that it doth not perſonate a Chriſtian, but lives the very life of a Chriſtian, and hath the very ſpirit and principles of a Chriſtian in it.

3. *Thirdly*, By theſe trials, pride and ſelf-confidence are deſtroyed and mortified in the ſaints, as much as by any thing in the world. We never ſee what poor weak creatures we are, until we come to the trial. It is ſaid, Deut. viii. 2. "God led Iſrael through the deſert, "to prove them, and to humble them." When we are proved, then we are humbled. Thoſe that over-reckon their graces before the trial, ſee they muſt come to another account, and take new meaſures of themſelves after they have been upon trial.

Ah! little did I think, ſaith one, that I had ſo much love for the world, and ſo little for God, until afflictions tried it. I could not have believed that ever the creature had got ſo deep into my heart, until providence either threatened or made a ſeparation, and then I found it. I thought I had been rich in faith, until ſuch a danger befel me, or ſuch a want began to pinch hard; and then I ſaw how unable I was to truſt God for protection, or proviſion. O it is a good thing that our hearts be kept humble and lowly, how rich ſoever they be in grace!

4. *Fourthly*, By trials grace is kept in exerciſe, and the gracious ſoul preſerved from ſecurity and ſpiritual ſlothfulneſs. Trials are to grace what the eſtuations and continual agitations of the waters are to the ſea, or what the racking of wines from the lees is to it: Were it not for our frequent trials and exerciſes, we ſhould quickly ſettle upon the lees, and our duties would be (as God complains of Ephraim) like ſour or dead drink, Hoſea iv. 18. flat and ſpiritleſs. "Moab "hath been at eaſe from his youth, and he hath ſettled on his lees,

" and hath not been emptied from veſſel to veſſel; neither hath he " gone into captivity; therefore his taſte remained in him, and his " ſcent is not changed," Jer. xlviii. 11.

Much after that rate it would be with our hearts, did not the Lord frequently try and exerciſe them. Let the beſt man be without ſome trial or other but a few months, and you may find the want of it in his prayers and conferences quickly. O what a tang of formality will be found in them! And is it for the honour of God, or profit of his people, that it ſhould be ſo? No, the Lord knows it is not; but how ſhall their ſpirits be reduced to their former zealous heavenly temper again? Why, ſaith the Lord, they muſt into the furnace again: " I will melt them and try them; for how ſhall I do for the " daughter of my people," Jer ix. 7. I love them too well to loſe them for want of a rod. Alas! If I ſhould ſuffer things to go on at this rate, what will become of them in a little time? What delight can I take in their duties, when the faith, fervour, humility, and holy ſerioufneſs of their ſpirits are wanting in them? I will therefore " refine them as ſilver is refined, and try them as gold is tried, and " they ſhall call upon my name, and I will hear them, and I will " ſay, It is my people, and they ſhall ſay, The Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. and thus the Lord chides himſelf friend again with his people.

Thus he recovers them to their true temper, and thus his viſitations do preſerve their ſpirits; and when the Lord ſees theſe ſweet effects of his trials upon them, it greatly pleaſeth him. O now, ſaith God, I like it; this providence hath done them good; this rod was well beſtowed; the letting looſe of this temptation, or that corruption upon them, hath made them find their knees again; now I hear the voice of my child again.

Beloved, this is a bleſſed fruit and effect of our frequent trials; and how ungrateful ſoever they are to fleſh and blood, that affects eaſe, and is loth to be diſturbed, yet it is neceſſary to the preſervation of our ſpirits.

5. *Fifthly*, By the trial of our graces Satan is defeated, and his accuſations of the ſaints found to be mere ſlanders. It is a very common thing with the devil and wicked men, to accuſe the people of God of hypocriſy, and to tell the world they are not the men and women they are taken to be; and that if their inſide were but turned out by ſome thorough trial, or deep ſearch, it would appear that religion did not indeed live in their ſouls, as they pretend, but that they only act a part, and perſonate heavenly and mortified perſons upon the public ſtage of profeſſion.

Thus the accuſer of the brethren ſuggeſts the hypocriſy of Job, chap. ii. 5. " Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and " his fleſh, and he will curſe thee to thy face;" q. d. Well might Job ſerve thee whilſt thou haſt been ſo bountiful a maſter to him; he hath been well rewarded for all the ſervice he hath done thee;

but if thou ſtop the current of his proſperity, thou ſhalt ſee how quickly he will ſtop the courſe of his duty; A few laſhes from thy hand will make him curſe thee to thy face. But O what ſhame and diſappointment was it to that envious ſpirit? What a vindication of Job's integrity, when under the greateſt trials of his faith and patience, he ſtill held faſt his integrity, and ſhewed himſelf as great a pattern of patience under the croſs, as he had been of piety in the days of his greateſt proſperity! Satan gets nothing by bringing forth the ſaints upon the ſtage, to be made a ſpectacle to angels and men, as it is, 1 Cor. iv. 9.

6. *Sixthly*, and *laſtly*, The frequent trials of grace exhibit a full and living teſtimony againſt the atheiſm of the world. Theſe prove beyond all words or arguments that religion is no fancy, but the greateſt reality in the world: Men would make religion but a fancy, and the zeal of its profeſſors, but the intemperate heat of ſome crazy brains, over-heated with a fond notion.

They that never felt the real influences of religion upon their own ſouls, will not believe that others do feel them. Serious piety is become the ludicrous ſubject with which the wanton wits of this atheiſtical world ſport themſelves. But behold the wiſdom and goodneſs of God exhibiting to the world the undeniable teſtimonies of the truth of religion, as often as the ſincere profeſſors thereof are brought to the teſt by afflictions from the hand of God, or perſecution from the hands of men: Lo! *here is the faith and patience of the ſaints;* here is their courage, meekneſs, and ſelf-denial, ſhining as gold in the fire; they have the real proofs of it before their eyes; inſtead of caſting them into hell, and convincing them by eternal fire, he is pleaſed to caſt his own people into the fire of affliction, that they who ſcoff at them may be convinced at an eaſier and cheaper rate. It is no new thing to ſee the enemies of religion brought over to embrace it, by the conſtancy and faithfulneſs of the ſaints in their trials and ſufferings for it. God grant that the atheiſm of this preſent generation do not occaſion a more fiery trial to the people of God in it, than they have yet ſuffered!

## CHAP. X.

*Shewing that that grace only is to be reckoned ſincere and real, which can endure thoſe trials which God appoints, or permits, for the diſcovery of it.*

### SECT. I.

BEFORE I offer you the proofs and evidences of this truth, it will be neceſſary to prevent ſome miſtakes that may be occaſioned by miſunderſtanding it.

*Caution* 1. And in the firſt place, we are not to think aſſurance of

our ſincerity impoſſible to be had in this life, becauſe as long as we live here, we are in a ſtate of trial; and how many trials ſoever have been made upon us already, yet ſtill there are more to come; and we know not what we ſhall prove in future trials, though God hath kept us upright in former trials: No, this is none of my meaning; nor doth ſuch a concluſion neceſſarily follow this aſſertion: For a Chriſtian that hath rightly cloſed with Chriſt at firſt, and been faithful in the duties of active and paſſive obedience hitherto, may be aſſured, upon good grounds, of a victory before he come to the fire of his remaining trials. So was the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 35, &c. "Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, "or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or "ſword? Nay, in all theſe we are more than conquerors, thro' him "that hath loved us." Here is an aſſured triumph before the combat. So Job xxiii. 10. "But he knoweth the way that I take; "when he hath tried me, I ſhall come forth as gold." He appeals to God for the ſincerity of his heart ſo far as he had hitherto gone in the way of religion, and thence concludes, that whatever trials God ſhould bring him to for time to come, he ſhould come forth as gold, i. e. he ſhould not loſe one grain by the fire. And this confidence of a gracious ſoul is built not only upon experience gained in former trials, but upon faith in the power, promiſes, and faithfulneſs of God, which are engaged for him in the covenant of grace, to keep him in the greateſt dangers that befal him in this world.

He believes the power of God is able to make him ſtand, though he hath no power nor might in himſelf to overcome the leaſt temptation, 1 Pet. i. 5. "You are kept, φρουρουμενους (kept as in a garriſon) by "the power of God through faith unto ſalvation." When Chriſt hath once taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul by his ſpirit, he fortifies it by his power, as in a garriſon: that uſing the means, it be ſurprized or betrayed no more into the enemy's hand, ſo as finally to be loſt.

He builds this confidence alſo upon the promiſes of God, which are his ſecurity in future dangers: And how are all the pages of the Bible beſpangled with ſuch promiſes, as the firmament is with bright and glorious ſtars? Such are theſe of the firſt magnitude, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. "Chriſt ſhall confirm you to the end, that you may be blameleſs "in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. God is faithful, by whom ye "are called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." And no leſs ſatisfying and ſweet is that, Jer. xxxii. 40. "And I "will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn "away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their "hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me." And of the ſame nature is that alſo, John x. 27, 28. "My ſheep hear my voice, and I "know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; "and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any man pluck them out "of my hand."

If there be any hypocrite in ſheeps-clothing, he hath no part or

lot in this promiſe; but it ſecures the whole flock of Chriſt, great and ſmall, againſt all danger.

He alſo builds his aſſurance upon the faithfulneſs of God, which ſtands engaged to make good every line, word, and ſyllable of his promiſes to his people; ſo we find, in 1 Cor. x. 13. "There hath "no temptation taken you but ſuch as is common to man; but God "is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are "able; but will with every temptation make a way to eſcape, that "ye may be able to bear it." And, 2 Theſ. iii. 3. "But the Lord "is faithful, who ſhall eſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil."

Add to this, the conſtant prevalent interceſſion of Chriſt in heaven for his people, in all their trials: and thus you will ſee a ſincere Chriſtian need not to deny himſelf the joy and comfort of his aſſurance, upon the account and ſuppoſition of his future trials.

SECT. II.

*Caution* 2. NOR do we here ſuppoſe, in this aſſertion, that inherent grace in the ſaints hath a ſufficiency of ability in itſelf to endure the greateſt and ſevereſt trials that can befal it in this world. It is certain that it ſhall be carried ſafely through all, but not in its own ſtrength and ability.

This is a true obſervation of the learned Gerſon, *Perfectiones ſibi relictæ, ſunt pondera ad ruinam:* The moſt perfect creature left to itſelf, will fall into ruin. This was exemplified in the angels that fell; and in Adam, though in a perfect ſtate. Divine preſervation is the prop which ſupports the beſt creatures from ruin. Grace itſelf is but a creature, and therefore a dependent being: It is but a ſtream, depending upon the ſupply of the fountain: If the fountain let not forth itſelf, what becomes of the ſtream? That is a true and judicious obſervation of the learned Dr Ames, *Perſeverantia fidelium, vel immutabilis eorum conditio ſecundum integram ejus rationem, non pervenit a principio intrinſeco ſolo, nec a ſolo extrinſeco; ſed partim ab intrinſeco, ex natura vitæ ſpiritualis a Chriſto fluentis, et partim ab extrinſeco, ex cuſtodia, protectione et directione Dei; Ameſii Coronis*, Art. 5. The perſeverance of believers, or the immutability of their condition, if we view the whole ground and reaſon of it, is not wholly from within, or wholly from without itſelf; but partly from the nature of the ſpiritual life which flows from Chriſt into them, and partly from the keeping, protection, and direction of God: That protection is always afforded to this life of grace; and this life of grace always needs that protection. The beſt of men are but men at beſt, as one ſpeaks: It was not Peter's grace and reſolution that kept him, but Chriſt's care of him and interceſſion for him, Luke xxii. 32. "Be ſtrong in "the Lord, (ſaith the apoſtle) and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10. "Without me (ſaith Chriſt) ye can do nothing," John xv. 5.

Neither of theſe is that which I have before me to prove; but this is that which I aim at, that ſuch ſeeming grace as was never

yet brought to the trial, nor will be able to bear the trial, when God ſhall bring it thereto, muſt not paſs for current (as too frequently it doth) among us: Such grace will neither comfort us now, nor ſave us hereafter: For,

SECT. III.

1. FIRST, great numbers of perſons in the profeſſing world are deceived and deſtroyed by truſting to ſeeming and untried grace: this was the miſerable condition of thoſe Laodicean profeſſors in the text; they reckoned themſelves rich, but were really poor: All is not gold that glitters; their gold (as they accounted it) was never tried in the fire. If a man's whole eſtate lay in ſome precious ſtone, ſuppoſe a rich diamond, how is he concerned to have it thoroughly tried, to ſee whether it will bear a ſmart ſtroke with a hammer, or fly like a Briſtol diamond under it? All that you are worth lies in the truth and ſincerity of your grace; and till that be tried you know not whether you be worth any thing or nothing.

*Reader*, There are two ſad ſights in the world which cannot but deeply affect every upright heart: one is to ſee ſo many thouſands of rational and ingenious men in the Romiſh church, by an implicit faith in their guides, venturing their ſouls upon their bare word; never ſearching the ſcriptures with their own eyes, but wholly truſting to the infallability of a pope or a council; when, in the mean time, they would fear to take their word for a ſum of money, without ſome further ſecurity. It is amazing to behold the ſoul-deſtroying, eaſy credulity of thoſe men; but this is a ſtroke of madneſs and ſpiritual infatuation, judicially inflicted upon them, that the judgment which is written might be fulfilled in them, "God ſhall ſend "them ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe a lie," 2 Theſſ. ii. 11.

And yet more amazing is that ſtroke of God upon multitudes of vain and formal profeſſors even in the reformed Proteſtant churches, where no man is reſtrained from ſearching the ſcriptures; nay, where men are ſo frequently and earneſtly preſſed, from ſabbath to ſabbath, to examine themſelves, and prove their own work, that yet ſo many are content to leave all at hazard, and without any more ado, or farther ſearch in the matter, credit the report of their own deceitful hearts, and take all for granted, without due trial or examination of the matter.

Surely, no one thing ſends down more ſouls daily to hell out of the profeſſing world than this doth. The five fooliſh virgins (i. e. the unprincipled profeſſors in the reformed churches) periſhed this way; they took it for granted all was well, becauſe they had lamps of profeſſion as well as others; and ſaw not the cheat till the cry was heard at midnight, and their unfurniſhed lamps went out, Matth. xxv.

2. *Secondly*, The promiſes of ſalvation are made over to tried grace, and ſuch only as will endure the trial: So James i. 12. "Bleſſed is

" the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he ſhall " receive the crown of life which God hath promiſed to them that " love him:" We muſt be firſt tried, and then crowned. " If a " man ſtrive for maſteries, yet is he not crowned, except he ſtrive " lawfully," 2 Tim. ii. 5. He manifeſtly alludes to the Roman games, to which there were judges appointed to ſee that no foul play were offered contrary to the law for wreſtling; and where it was found the crown was denied them. Not to him that ſets forth in the morning with reſolution and gallantry, but to him that holds out till the evening of his life, is the promiſe made; Matth. x. 22. " He that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved." So Rom. ii. 7. " To them who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory " and honour, and immortality, eternal life." And once more, Heb. iii. 14. " We are made partakers of Chriſt, if we hold the be- " ginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end." So that if you ſhould endure ſome few ſlighter troubles, and faint at laſt, give out when a cloſer trial befals you, all your labours and ſufferings are in vain. Sincerity and final perſeverance are the conditions of all ſpecial promiſes.

3. *Thirdly*, Every man's graces and duties muſt be tried and weighed by God in the great day; and if they cannot endure theſe leſſer trials to which God expoſes them now, how will they endure that ſevere and exact trial to which he will bring them then? No man can ſearch his own heart with that exactneſs in this world, as God will ſearch it in the world to come.

I may ſay in this caſe to you as the Lord ſpake to Jeremiah, chap. xii. 5. " If thou haſt run with the footmen, and they have wearied " thee, then how canſt thou contend with horſes? and if in the " land of peace, wherein thou truſtedſt, they have wearied thee, " then how wilt thou do in the ſwelling of Jordan?" This was ſpoken to encourage the prophet to conſtancy in his work; and as if the Lord had ſaid, O Jeremy, do the ſtrivings of the men of Anathoth, thine own town, diſhearten thee? Pluck up thy ſpirits, and faint not; there are harder trials than theſe that thou muſt undergo at Jeruſalem; theſe are no more to what is coming, than the running with footmen is to the contending with horſes, or the paſſing a ſmall rivulet to the ſwellings of Jordan.

To allude to this; if our graces and duties cannot bear theſe lighter trials; if a little lift of proſperity, or lighter ſtroke of adverſity diſcover ſo much falſeneſs, rottenneſs, pride, and ſelfiſhneſs in the heart; if we cannot reſiſt the motions of corruptions, but yield ourſelves to obey ſin in the luſts of it; if we can neither keep our hearts with God in duties, nor mourn for our wanderings from him; if a few ſcoffs from wicked tongues, or trials of perſecution from the hands of men will cauſe us to faint in the way, and turn back from following the Lord, what ſhall we do when " He comes whoſe fan is in " his hand, and who will thoroughly purge his floor;" Matth. iii.

12. who will try every man's work as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13. ſearch the ſecrets of all hearts, Rom. ii. 16. *weigh every man to his ounces and drachms?* Surely we can take little comfort in that which is ſo unable to bear the ſevere trials of that day, that it cannot ſtand before the ſlighter trials of this day.

4. *Fourthly*, True grace is willing to be tried, and nothing is more deſirable to an upright ſoul, than to know his own condition: if therefore we ſhun the trial, and are loth to ſearch ourſelves, or be ſearched by the Lord, our condition is ſuſpicious, and we can take little comfort in it. It was David's earneſt deſire, Pſalm cxxxix. 23. that God would thoroughly ſearch his heart and reins, and ſee if there were any way of wickedneſs in him. Falſe grace is ſhy of God's eye, it cares not to be examined; but this is the delight of ſincere ones: "Every one that doth evil hateth the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be "reproved; but he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his "deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God," John iii. 20, 21.

The reaſon is plain why hypocriſy cannot endure to come to the touchſtone and teſt; for hypocrites, having a ſecret conſciouſneſs of their own guilt and unſoundneſs, know, that by this means their vain confidence would quickly be confuted, and all their reputation for religion blaſted. But oh! if men dare not ſtand before the word, as it is now opened and applied by miniſters, how will they ſtand when it ſhall be opened and applied in another manner by Jeſus Chriſt?

O profeſſor, if thy condition be good, thy heart right, thou wilt deſire to know the very worſt of thyſelf; and when thou haſt made the deepeſt ſearch thou canſt, thou wilt ſtill fear thou haſt not been ſevere enough, and impartial enough to thyſelf; nothing will give thee more content than when thou feeleſt the word dividing thy ſoul and ſpirit, thy joints and marrow; nothing ſo much comforts thee under, or after an affliction, as the diſcovery it hath made of my heart; thou wilt ſeem to feel with what affection thoſe words came from the prophet's lips, Jer. xii. 2. "But thou, O Lord, know-"eſt me, thou haſt ſeen me, and tried my heart towards thee." O what a refreſhing ſweetneſs will ſtream through thy heart, and all the powers of thy ſoul, when thou canſt make the like appeal to God with like ſincerity! And certainly, without ſuch a diſpoſition of ſpirit towards the trial of our graces, we can have little evidence of the truth of them.

## CHAP. XI.

*Containing divers practical inſtructive inferences from this doctrine; with a ſerious exhortation to ſelf-trial and thorough examination.*

### SECT. I.

*Infer.* 1. ARE there ſuch variety of trials appointed to examine the ſincerity of men's graces; how great a vanity

then is hypocriſy, and to how little purpoſe do men endeavour to conceal and hide it? We ſay, Murder will out; and we may as confidently affirm, Hypocriſy will out. When Rebecca had laid the plot to diſguiſe her ſon Jacob, and by perſonating his brother, to get the bleſſing, Jacob thus objects againſt it, "My father peradventure "will feel me, and I ſhall ſeem to him as a deceiver; and I ſhall "bring a curſe upon me, and not a bleſſing," Gen. xxvii. 12, as if he ſhould ſay, but what if my father detect the cheat, how then ſhall I look him in the face? How ſhall I eſcape a curſe? After the ſame manner every upright ſoul ſcares itſelf from the way of hypocriſy. If I diſſemble, and pretend to be what I am not, my Father will find me out. Ah! there is no darkneſs nor ſhadow of death that can conceal the hypocrite, but out will come at laſt, let him uſe all the art he can to hide it. Oftentimes God diſcovers him by the trials he appoints in this world; and men in that day ſhall "return "and diſcern betwixt the righteous and the wicked, between him "that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not," Mal. iii. 18. But if he make an hard ſhift to get by a private way to hell, carrying this comfort with him to the laſt ſtep, That no body knows or thinks he is gone thither; yet there will be a day when God will ſtrip him naked before the great aſſembly of angels and men, and all ſhall point at them, and ſay, *Lo! this is the man that made not God his hope.*

This is he that wore a garment of profeſſion to deceive, but God hath now ſtript him out of it, and all men ſee what he is: For, "There is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, and hid that "ſhall not be known," Matth. x. 26. And the apoſtle aſſures us, 1 Tim. v. 24, 25. "That they that are otherwiſe, cannot be hid." If men's works be not good, it is impoſſible they ſhould be hid long: A gilded piece of braſs may paſs from hand to hand a little while, but the touchſtone will diſcover the baſe metal: If that do not, the fire will.

O ſinners! away with your hypocriſy, be honeſt, ſincere, plain, and hearty in religion: If not, confuſion of face ſhall be your recompence from the Lord; that is what you ſhall get by it.

*Infer.* 2. *Secondly*, Are there ſuch trials appointed and permitted by the Lord for the diſcovery of his people's ſincerity in this world? *Then let none of God's people expect a quiet ſtation in this world*; Certainly you ſhall meet with no reſt here, you muſt out of one fire into another; and it is a merciful condeſcenſion of the Lord to poor creatures, thus to concern himſelf for their ſafety and benefit: "What is man that thou ſhouldſt magnify him? and that thou "ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon him? that thou ſhouldſt viſit him "every morning, and try him every moment?" Job vii. 17, 18.

O it is a great deal of honour put upon a poor worm, when God will every moment try him and viſit him; it argues the great eſteem the goldſmith hath of his gold, when he will ſit by the furnace himſelf, and order the fire with his own hand; when he pries ſo often

and ſo curiouſly into the fining-pot, to ſee that none of his precious metal, upon which he ſets his heart, be loſt.

Think it not then debaſing to you to be ſo often expoſed to trials. If God did not value you highly, he would not try you ſo frequently: What would become of you if your condition here ſhould be more ſettled and quiet than now it is? I believe you find droſs enough in your hearts after all the fires into which God hath caſt you: Surely there is filth enough in the beſt of God's people to take all this, it may be a great deal more trouble than they have yet met with. We fancy it a brave life to live at eaſe; and if we meet with longer reſpites and intervals of trial than uſual, we are apt to ſay, We ſhall never be moved, as David did, Pſal. xxx. 6. or we ſhall die in our neſt, as it is Job xxix. 18. Our hard and difficult days are over; but woe to us if God ſhould give us the deſire of our hearts in this. See what the temper of thoſe men's ſpirits is, that meet with no changes, Pſal. lv. 19. "Becauſe they have no changes, therefore "they fear not God." O it is better to be preſerved ſweet in brine, than to rot in honey!

Infer. 3. Thirdly, *Let none boaſt in a carnal confidence of their own ſtrength and ſtability.* You are yet in a ſtate of trial, Hitherto God hath kept you upright in all your trials; bleſs God, but boaſt not; you are but feathers in the wind of temptation, if God leave you to yourſelves. Peter told Chriſt, (and doubtleſs he ſpoke no more than he honeſtly meant) "Though all men forſake thee, yet will not I:" And you know what he did when the hour of his trial came, Matth. xxvi. 35. Angels left to themſelves have fallen: It is better to be an humble worm than a proud angel.

Ah! how many Pendletons will this profeſſing age ſhew, if once God bring us to the fiery trial? "Let him that thinks he ſtands, "take heed leſt he fall." You have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin. None ſtand upon firmer ground than thoſe that ſee nothing in themſelves to ſtand upon; he that leans upon his own arm uſually benumbs it, and makes it uſeleſs.

*Infer.* 4. *Fourthly*, Doth God kindle ſo many fires in Sion, and ſet his furnaces in Jeruſalem, to diſcover and ſeparate the droſs from the gold? How contrary are thoſe men to God that allow, yea, and prize the droſs of hypocriſy which God hates, and ſtick not to make the holy God a patronizer and countenancer of it in the hearts and lives of men?

It is amazing to read what popiſh pens have impudently written about this matter: * Sylveſter puts the queſtion, Whether it be a ſin to make a falſe ſhew of ſanctity? And anſwers it thus: If it be for the honour of God and profit of others, it is no ſin. Nay, they have a reverence for hypocriſy, as an holy art. Vicentius ſpends a whole chapter in commendation of the hypocriſy of St Dominio, and

* *A ſum. edo. ſimulatio, n.* 4.

entitles it, *De ſancta ejus hypocriſi:* i. e. Of the holy hypocriſy of that ſaint; reckoning it among his commendations, that he had the art of diſſembling. And yet, one peg higher, a religious perſon (ſaith * another) that feigns himſelf to have more holineſs than he hath, that others may be edified, ſins not, but rather merits.

Bluſh, O heavens! that ever ſuch factors for hell ſhould open and vend ſuch ware as this in the public market, and invite the world to hypocriſy, as that which makes for the glory of God, the edification of men, and a work meritorious in the hypocrite himſelf: This is the doctrine of devils indeed!

*Infer.* 5. *Fifthly*, If it be ſo that all grace muſt come to the teſt, and be tried as gold in the fire, even in this world; how are all men concerned to lay a ſolid foundation at firſt, and thoroughly deliberate the terms upon which they cloſe with Chriſt, and engage in the profeſſion of his name? "Which of you, (ſaith Chriſt) intending to "build a tower, ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt? Luke xiv. 28. If ſome men had ſet down at firſt, and pondered the conditions and terms of Chriſt, they had not ſat down now diſcouraged, and tried in the way. The apoſtle Paul went to work at another rate; he accounted all but dung and droſs for Chriſt, Phil. iii. 8. and was of the ſame mind when the actual trial came; for then he tells us, "He counted not his life dear unto him," Acts xx. 24. And the apoſtle Peter admoniſhes believers "not to think it ſtrange "concerning the fiery trial which was to try them," 1 Pet. iv. 12. q. d. Let none of theſe things be ſurpriſals to you; you are told before-hand what you muſt truſt to; every Chriſtian muſt be a martyr, at leaſt in the diſpoſition and reſolution of his heart.

O that men would balance the advantages and diſadvantages of religion, and thoroughly ponder the matter in their deepeſt thoughts! To the teſt you muſt come; the rain will fall, and the ſtorm beat upon your buildings; look carefully therefore to the foundations.

*Infer.* 6. *Sixthly*, and *laſtly*, Learn from this point the unavoidableneſs of ſcandles and offences in the way of religion; for if there be a neceſſity of trial, there is alſo a neceſſity of ſcandal. "It muſt needs "be that offences come," Luke xvii. 1. Why muſt it needs be? The reaſon is evident; all muſt come to the trial, and all are not able to bear it. Our Lord tells us, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. of a day of great ſtraits and perplexity coming: "And then (ſaith he) ſhall "many be offended." The day of trial is the day of ſcandal: By theſe offences ſome are put a ſearching themſelves, and ſome fall a cenſuring all others; but the holy God brings about his end both ways, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh.

SECT. II.

WELL then, if it be ſo that all muſt go into the furnace, let every man try his own work; examine yourſelves, profeſſors,

* *Roſella in v. hypocriſis, n.* 1.

ſearch your hearts, commune with your reins, nothing more concerns you in all the world than this doth. O that you would be more in your cloſets, and oftener upon your knees! O that you would look into the Bible, then into your hearts, and then to God, ſaying with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; prove me and "try my reins, and ſee if there be any way of iniquity in me!" Never did religion thrive in the world ſince men's heads have been ſo over-heated with notions and controverſies, and their hearts ſo ſenſibly cooled in their cloſet-work. I have elſewhere * more largely preſſed this duty upon the profeſſors of this generation, and thither ſhall refer the reader for the preſent, to ſee the neceſſity and importance of this work.

Here I ſhall only urge the duty of ſelf-trial by ſome preſſing motives and awakening conſiderations.

*Motive* 1. And the firſt ſhall be the exceeding difficulty of this work; difficulty in ſome caſes may be a diſcouragement; but where the matter is of abſolute neceſſity, as it is here, nothing provokes more to diligence; "Strive (ſaith our Lord) to enter in at the ſtrait "gate, for many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able," Luke xiii. 24. A double difficulty is found attending this work of ſelf-trial: Difficulty in bringing the heart to it; and difficulty in the right and ſucceſsful management of it. Who finds it not hard to perſuade his heart to ſuch work as this? Nature declines it, fleſh and blood reliſh it not: It is one of the great ſeverities in religion: It is no eaſy thing to bring a man and his own heart together.

It is in this caſe as in the ſtudy of Geography; we are more inquiſitive to know, and delighted when we diſcover the rarities of foreign countries, and ſtrange things in the remote parts of the world, than thoſe of our own native country. I fear there be many profeſſors of religion that can ſpend day after day in hearing, and love to be diſputing fruitleſs controverſies, that never ſpend one day in ſearching what influence all thoſe ſermons they have heard have had upon their hearts, or in rightly ſtating and determining that great controverſy, in whoſe right and poſſeſſion their ſouls are, and which way they ſhall go as ſoon as death hath divided them from thoſe mortal bodies; yea, I doubt, many ſinful hours are ſpent in prying into, reporting, and cenſuring the failings of others, and not one hour faithfully employed in judging their own hearts before the Lord: Oh! men had rather be about any work than this; there is no pleaſure in it to the fleſh.

And yet how difficult ſoever it be to bring our hearts to the work, it is certainly much more difficult to manage it ſucceſsfully, and bring the great queſtion of our ſincerity to a clear reſult and iſſue. O how many upright hearts have ſat cloſe to this work many a year, and lifted up many a cry to heaven, and ſhed many ſecret undiſſembled tears

* See before, my Saint Indeed, &c.

about it; and yet ſtill are in the dark, and their minds greatly perplexed, and filled with fear about it! What would they not do? What would they not ſuffer? What pleaſant enjoyment would they not gladly part with, to arrive at the deſire of their ſouls, the full aſſurance of their ſincerity? It was the ſaying of a pious woman, I have born, ſaid ſhe, ſeven children, and they have coſt me as dear as ever children coſt a mother, yet would I be content to endure all that ſorrow over again, to be aſſured of the love of God to my ſoul.

*Motive* 2. *Secondly*, And as the work is full of difficulty, ſo the diſcovery of your ſincerity will be full of ſweetneſs and joy unſpeakable: It will never repent you that you have prayed and mourned, that you have trembled and feared, that you have ſearched and tried: Nay, it will never repent you, that God hath tried you by thouſands of ſharp afflictions and deep ſufferings, if, after all, your ſincerity may be fully cleared up to the ſatisfaction of your ſouls; for in the ſame day your ſincerity ſhall be cleared, your title to Chriſt will be made as clear to your ſouls as your ſincerity is; you may then go to the promiſes boldly, and take your own Chriſt into the arms of your faith, and ſay, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his!" Yea, you may be confident, it ſhall be well with you in the judgment of the great day, for "God will not caſt away the upright man," Job viii. 20. If the word clear you now, it cannot condemn you then.

O what an eaſe is it to the ſoul, when the fears and doubts that hang about it are gone! When a man ſees what he is, and what he hath in Chriſt and the promiſes, and what he hath to do; even to ſpend the time betwixt this and heaven, in admiring the grace of God that hath delivered him from the ruining miſtakes and miſcarriages by which ſo great a part of the profeſſing world are loſt to all eternity.

*Motive* 3. *Thirdly*, The deep concernment of your ſouls in the matter to be tried, ſhould awaken you to the utmoſt diligence about it. The trials of men for their life, at human bars, is but a trifle to this: It is our eternal happineſs that ſtands or falls with your ſincerity.

It is ſaid in the trial of opinions, that if a man ſuperſtruct hay or ſtubble upon the foundation, he ſhall ſuffer loſs; yet he himſelf may be ſaved, 1 Cor. iii. 12. But if hypocriſy be in the foundation, there is no ſuch relief, there is no poſſibility of ſalvation in that caſe.

Ah, reader, thou muſt be caſt for ever according to the integrity or hypocriſy of thy heart with God. Summon in them all the powers of thy ſoul: bring thy thoughts as cloſe as it is poſſible to bring them to this matter: If there be any ſubject of conſideration able to drink up the ſpirits of a man, here it is: Never was time put to an higher improvement; never were thoughts ſpent upon a more important buſineſs than this is: Happy is the man that reſcues the years, months, days, yea, the very moments of his life from other employments to

conſecrate them unto this ſolemn, awful, and moſt important buſineſs!

*Motive* 4. *Fourthly*, How evidential will it be of your ſincerity, when you are willing to come to the trial of your own hearts?

Suppoſe your doubts and fears ſhould in ſome degree remain with you; yet in this you may take ſome comfort, that if hypocriſy be in your heart, it is not there by conſent: You are not loth to riſe and come to trial, becauſe, like Rachel, you ſit upon your idols: Certainly it is a good ſign thy heart is right when it is filled with ſo much fear leſt it ſhould be falſe. You know all the diſciples ſaid, "Maſter "is it I?" before Judas, who was the traitor, ſpake a word. "Laſt "of all (ſaith the text) Judas ſaid, Is it I?" Our willingneſs to be tried is a good ſign that the deſire of our ſoul is to be right with God.

*Motive* 5. *Fifthly*, Conclude it to be your great advantage to be thoroughly tried, whatever you be found to be in the trial: If you be found ſincere, you are richly rewarded for all your pains and labour: Never did that man repent of digging and toiling, that, after all, hit upon the rich vein that he digged for: What is a vein of gold to a vein of ſincerity!

If upon ſearch you find the contrary, a falſe, hypocritical, unſound heart, yet in that very ſad diſcovery you meet with the greateſt advantage that ever you had in your lives for ſalvation. This diſcovery is your great advantage: For now your vain confidence being overturned, and your ungrounded hopes deſtroyed; you lie open to the ſtroke of a deep and effectual conviction of your ſin and miſery, which is the introductive mercy to all other mercies to your ſouls; and ſurely till you come to that, to give up your falſe hopes, and quit your vain pretenſions, there is no hope of you. Chriſt told the Phariſees, Matth. xxi. 31. Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before you: Publicans were the worſt ſort of men, and harlots the worſt ſort of women, and yet they ſtood in a fairer way for heaven than the hypocritical Phariſees, becauſe conviction had eaſier acceſs to their conſciences: They had not thoſe defences and pleas of duty and ſtrictneſs to ward off the word that the ſelf-cozening Phariſees had.

I may ſay of your vain and groundleſs hopes, as Chriſt, in another ſenſe, ſaid to the officers that came to ſeize him in the garden, *If you ſeek me, let theſe go their way.* So it is here, if you expect Chriſt and ſalvation by him, let your vain confidences go their way; away with your maſques and vizards, if ever you expect to ſee Chriſt. O it is your happineſs to have all theſe things ſtript off, and your nakedneſs and poverty diſcovered, that you may be rich, as the text ſpeaks.

*Motive* 6. *Sixthly*, Conſider how near the day of death and judgment approach you. O theſe are ſearching days wherein you cannot be hid: Will your conſciences, think you, be put off in a dying day as eaſily as they are now? No, you know they will not.

I have heard of a good man that conſumed not only the greateſt part of the day, but a very conſiderable part of the night alſo in

prayer, to the great weakening of his body; and being aſked by a relation why he did ſo, and prayed to favour himſelf, he returned this anſwer, *O I muſt die, I muſt die;* plainly intimating, that ſo great is the concernment of dying in a clear aſſured condition, that it is richly worth the expence of all our time and ſtrength to ſecure it.

You know alſo that *after death the judgment*, Heb. ix. 27. you are haſtening to the judgment of the great and terrible God. Death will put you into his balance to be weighed exactly; and what gives the ſoul a louder call to ſearch itſelf with all diligence, whilſt it ſtands at the door of eternity, and its turn is not yet come to go before that awful tribunal: O that theſe conſiderations might have place upon our hearts!

## CHAP. XII.

*Containing divers helps for the clearing of ſincerity and diſcovery of hypocriſy.*

### SECT. I.

YOU ſee of what importance the duty of ſelf-examination is, and how many things put a neceſſity and a ſolemnity upon that work. Now, in the cloſe of all, I would offer you ſome helps for the due management thereof, that is as far as I can carry it: the Lord perſuade your hearts to the diligent and faithful application and uſe of them. The general rules to clear ſincerity are theſe that follow:

Rule 1. *We may not preſently conclude we are in the ſtate of hypocriſy, becauſe we find ſome workings of it, and tendencies to it in our ſpirits:* The beſt gold hath ſome droſs and alloy in it. Hypocriſy is a weed naturally ſpringing in all ground, the beſt heart is not perfectly clear or free of it: It may be we are ſtumbled, when we feel ſome workings or grudgings of this diſeaſe in ourſelves, and looking into ſuch ſcriptures as theſe, John i. 47. "Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom "there is no guile:" and Pſal. xxxii. 1. "Bleſſed is the man unto "whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whoſe ſpirit there is "no guile."

This I ſay may ſtumble ſome upright ſoul, not underſtanding in what an allayed and qualified ſenſe thoſe ſcriptures are to be underſtood: For by a *ſpirit without guile*, is not underſtood a perſon abſolutely free from all deceitfulneſs and falſeneſs of heart; this was the ſole prerogative of the Lord Jeſus, who was ſeparated from ſinners, in whoſe mouth was no guile found: In whom the prince of this world, in all his trials and attempts upon him, found nothing: But we muſt underſtand it of reigning and allowed hypocriſy; there is no ſuch guile in any of the ſaints: diſtinguiſh the preſence from the predominance of hypocriſy, and the doubt is reſolved.

Rule 2. *Every true ground of humiliation for ſin is not a ſufficient ground for doubting and queſtioning our eſtate and condition.*

There be many more things to humble us upon the account of our infirmity, than there are to ſtumble us upon the account of our integrity: It is the ſin and affliction of ſome good ſouls to call their condition in queſtion upon every ſlip and failing in the courſe of their obedience. This is the way to debar ourſelves from all the peace and comfort of the Chriſtian life: We find that Joſeph was once minded to put away Mary his eſpouſed wife, not knowing that the holy thing which was conceived in her was by the Holy Ghoſt. It is the ſin of hypocrites to take braſs for gold, and the folly of ſaints to call their gold braſs: Be as ſevere to yourſelves as you will, provided always you be juſt: "There is that maketh himſelf rich, and yet "hath nothing; and there is that maketh himſelf poor, and yet hath "great riches," Prov. xiii. 7. Hiram called the cities Solomon gave him, Cabul, Dirty, for they pleaſed him not, 1 Kings ix. 13. It is but an ill requital, an ungrateful return to God for the beſt of mercies, to undervalue them in our hearts, and be ready upon all occaſions to put them away as worth nothing.

Rule 3. *A ſtronger propenſion in our nature, and more frequent incidence in our practice to one ſin than another, do not preſently infer our hypocriſy, and the unſoundneſs of our hearts in religion.* It is true, every hypocrite hath ſome way of wickedneſs: Some *peccatum in deliciis*, iniquity that he delights in, and rolls as a ſweet morſel under his tongue; ſome luſt that he is not willing to part with, nor can endure that the knife of mortification ſhould touch it; and this undoubtedly argues the inſincerity and rottenneſs of his heart: And it is true alſo that the nature and conſtitution of the moſt ſanctified man inclines him rather to one ſin than to another, though he allow himſelf in none; yea, though he ſet himſelf more watchfully againſt that ſin than another, yet he may ſtill have more trouble and vexation, more temptation and defilement from it than any other.

As every man hath his proper gift, one after this manner, and another after that, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Cor. vii. 7. ſo every man hath his proper ſin alſo, one after this manner and another after that. For it is with original ſin as it is with the juice or ſap of the earth, which though it be the common matter of all kinds of fruits, yet it is ſpecificated according to the different ſorts of plants and ſeeds which it nouriſhes; in one it becomes an apple, in another a cherry, &c. Juſt ſo it is in original corruption, which is turned into this or that temptation or ſin, according to this or that conſtitution or employment it finds us in; in one it is paſſion, in another luſt, in a third covetouſneſs, in a fourth levity, and ſo on. Now I ſay the frequent aſſaults of this ſin, provided we indulge it not, but, by ſetting double guards, labour to keep ourſelves from our own iniquity, as David did, Pſalm xviii. 23. will not infer the hypocriſy of our hearts.

Rule 4. *A greater backwardneſs and indiſpoſedneſs to one duty rather*

*than another, doth not conclude the heart to be unsound and false with God, provided we do not inwardly dislike and disapprove any duty of religion, or except against it in our agreement with Christ, but that it riseth merely from the present weakness and distemper we labour under.*

There are some duties in religion, as suffering for Christ, bearing sharp reproofs for sin, that even an upright heart under a present distemper, may find a great deal of backwardness and lothness to; yet still he consents to the law, that it is good, is troubled that he cannot comply more cheerfully with his duty, and desires to stand complete in all the will of God: Perfection is his aim, and imperfections are his sorrows.

Some Christians have much ado to bring their hearts to fixed, solemn meditation; their hearts fly off from it, but this is their burden, that it should be so with them. True, it is a very dangerous sign of hypocrisy, when a man's zeal runs out in one channel of obedience only, and he hath not respect to all God's commandments; as physicians observe, the sweating of one part of the body, when all the rest is cold, is symptomatical, and argues an ill habit: But whilst the soul heartily approves all the will of God, and sincerely desires to come up to it, and mourns for its backwardness and deadness to this or that duty, and this is not fixed, but occasional, under some present indisposition out of which the soul riseth by the same degrees as sanctification riseth in him, and the Lord comes in with renewed strength upon him; this, I say, may consist, and is very ordinarily found to be the case of upright-hearted ones.

Rule 5. *The glances of the eye at self-ends in duties, whilst self is not the weight that moves the wheels, the principal end and design we drive at, and whilst those glances are corrected and mourned for, do not conclude the heart to be unsound and hypocritical in religion:* For even among the most deeply sanctified, few can keep their eye so steady and fixed with pure and unmixed respects to the glory of God, but that there will be (alas! too frequently) some bye-ends, insinuating and creeping into the heart.

These, like the fowls, seize upon the sacrifice, let the soul take what pains it can to drive them away: It is well that our High-priest bears the iniquities of our holy things for us. Peter had too much regard to the pleasing of men, and did not walk with that uprightness towards the Gentile Christians and the believing Jews, in the matter of liberty as became him, Gal. ii. 13, 14. for which, as Paul saith, he ought to be blamed, and he did blame him: But yet such a failing as that in the end of his duty did not condemn him. In public performances there may be too much vanity, in works of charity too much ostentation; these are all workings of hypocrisy in us, and matters of humiliation to us; but whilst they are disallowed, corrected, and mourned over, are consistent with integrity.

Rule 6. *The doubts and fears that hang upon, and perplex our spirits about the hypocrisy of our hearts, do not conclude that therefore we are*

*what we fear ourſelves to be.* God will not condemn every one for a hypocrite that ſuſpects, yea, or charges himſelf with hypocriſy. Holy David thought his heart was not right with God, after that great ſlip of his in the matter of Uriah; and therefore begs of God to renew a right ſpirit in him, Pſal. li. 10, 11, 12. his integrity was indeed wounded, and he thought deſtroyed by that fall.

Holy Mr Bradford ſo vehemently doubted the ſincerity of his heart, that he ſubſcribed ſome of his letters, as Mr Fox tells us, *John Bradford the hypocrite; a very painted ſepulchre:* And yet in ſo ſaying, he utterly misjudged the ſtate and temper of his own ſoul.

SECT. II.

WELL then, let not the upright be unjuſt to themſelves in cenſuring their own hearts; they are bad enough, but let us not make them worſe than they are, but thankfully own and acknowledge the leaſt degrees of grace and integrity in them; and poſſibly our uprightneſs might be ſooner diſcovered to us, if, in a due compoſure of ſpirit, we would ſit down and attend the true anſwers of our own hearts to ſuch queſtions as theſe are.

*Queſt.* 1. Do I make the approbation of God, or the applauſe of men, the very end and main deſign of my religious performances, according to 1 Theſſ. ii. 4. Col. iii. 23. will the acceptation of my duties with men ſatisfy me, whether God accept my duties and perſon or not?

*Queſt.* 2. Is it the reproach and ſhame that attends ſin at preſent, and the danger and miſery that will follow it hereafter, that reſtrains me from the commiſſion of it? Or is it the fear of God in my ſoul, and the hatred I bear to ſin as it is ſin? according to Pſal. xix. 12. and Pſal. cxix. 113.

*Queſt.* 3. Can I truly and heartily rejoice to ſee God's work carried on in the world, and his glory promoted by other hands, though I have no ſhare in the credit and honour of it, as Paul did? Phil. i. 18.

*Queſt.* 4. Is there no duty in religion ſo full of difficulty and ſelf-denial, but I deſire to comply with it? And is all the holy and good will of God acceptable to my ſoul, though I cannot riſe up with like readineſs to the performance of all duties; according to that pattern Pſal. cxix. 6?

*Queſt.* 5. Am I ſincerely reſolved to follow Chriſt and holineſs at all ſeaſons, however the aſpects of the times be upon religion? Or do I carry myſelf ſo warily and covertly as to ſhun all hazards for religion; having a ſecret reſerve in my heart to launch out no farther than I may return with ſafety; contrary to the practice and reſolution of upright ſouls? Pſalm cxvi. 3. Pſal. xliv. 18, 19. Rev. xxii. 11.

*Queſt.* 6. Do I make no conſcience of committing ſecret ſins, or neglecting ſecret duties? Or am I conſcientious both in the one and the other, according to the rules and patterns of integrity? Matth. vi. 5, 6. Pſal. xix. 12.

A few ſuch queſtions ſolemnly propounded to our own hearts, in a calm and ſerious hour, would ſound them, and diſcover much of their ſincerity towards the Lord.

SECT. III.

AND as upright hearts are too apt to apply to themſelves the threats and miſeries of hypocrites, ſo hypocrites, on the contrary, are as apt to catch hold of the promiſes and privileges pertaining to believers.

To detect therefore the ſoul-damning miſtakes of ſuch deceived ſouls, O that theſe following rules might be ſtudied, and faithfully applied to their conviction and recovery.

Rule 1. *It is not enough to clear a man from hypocriſy, that he knows not himſelf to be an hypocrite.* All hypocrites are not deſigning hypocrites; they deceive themſelves as well as others: "Many will ſay "to me in that day, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name," &c. Matth. vii. 22. Hell will be a mere ſurpriſal to multitudes of profeſſors: a man may live and die in a blind, ungrounded confidence of his ſafe condition, and not fear his ruin till he begin to feel it.

Rule 2. *Zeal and forwardneſs in the cauſe of God, and for the reformation of his worſhip, will not clear a man from the danger of hypocriſy.* Jehu was a zealous reformer, and yet but a painted ſepulchre. In the year 1549, reformation grew ſo much in reputation, even among the nobles and gentry in Germany, that many of them cauſed theſe five letters, *V. D. M. I. Æ.* being the initial letters of theſe words, *Verbum Domini manet in æternum:* i. e. *The word of the Lord abideth for ever*, to be wrought, or embroidered, or ſet in plates, ſome upon their cloaks, and others upon the ſleeves of their garments; to ſhew to all the world, ſaith my * author, that forſaking all popiſh traditions, they would now cleave to the pure doctrine and diſcipline of the eternal Word.

And no doubt they would have been as good as their word, if what was embroidered on their cloaks, had been engraven on their hearts; but, *Come, ſee my zeal*, mars all.

Rule 3. *It is no ſufficient evidence of a man's own integrity, that he hates hypocriſy in another:* for, as one proud man may hate another, and he that is covetous himſelf, will be apt to cenſure another for being ſo; luſts may be contrary to one another, as well as all of them contrary to grace; ſo may an hypocrite loath that in another, which yet he alloweth in himſelf: Nay, it is the policy of ſome to declaim againſt the hypocriſy of others, thereby to hide their own. Hypocrites are none of the moſt modeſt cenſurers of others, Pſal. xxxv. 16. A ſalt jeſt ſeaſoned their meat.

Rule 4. *The mere performance of private duties will not clear a man from hypocriſy.* The influence of education, or ſupport of reputation, or the impulſe of a convinced conſcience may induce a man to

* *John Wolfe, Lect. Memor. Tom. 2. ad Annum* 1549.

it; and yet all this while his heart may not be carried thither with hungry and thirſty deſires after God: it is not the matter of any duty that diſtinguiſhes the ſound and unſound profeſſors; but the motives, deſigns, and ends of the ſoul in them.

Rule 5. *The vogue and opinions you have got among Chriſtians, of your ſincerity, will not be ſufficient to clear you from the danger of hypocriſy.* Chriſt tells the angel of Sardis, Rev. iii. 1. "Thou haſt a "name that thou liveſt, and art dead." The fall of Hymeneus and Philetus could never have ſhaken the faith of the ſaints as it did, had they not had great credit in the church, and been men of renown for piety among them.

Rule 6. *Your reſpects and love to them that are the ſincere and upright ſervants of God, will not clear you from the danger of being hypocrites yourſelves:* for the bare loving of a Chriſtian is not characteriſtical and evidential of a man's own Chriſtianity, except he love him, *qua talis*, as he is a Chriſtian, or as he belongs to Chriſt; and ſo his ſincerity becomes the attractive of thy affection. There are a thouſand by-conſiderations and reſpects that may kindle a man's love to the ſaints, beſides their integrity.

## SECT IV.

WELL, then, if thou wouldſt indeed ſee the unſoundneſs of thy own heart, propound ſuch heart-ſounding queſtions as theſe to thyſelf.

*Queſt.* 1. Do I engage my heart to approach unto God in the courſe of my duties? Or do I go in the round of duties, taking no heed to my heart in them? If ſo, compare this ſymptom of thy hypocriſy with that in 2 Kings x. 3. and that in Ezek. xxx. 31, 32.

*Queſt.* 2. Am I not ſwayed and moved by ſelf-intereſt and carnal reſpects in the ways of religion, the accommodation of ſome worldly intereſt, or getting a name and reputation of godlineſs? If ſo, how apparently do the ſame ſymptoms of hypocriſy appear upon my ſoul, which did upon Judas, John xii. 6. and on Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 13, 14.

*Queſt.* 3. Have I not ſome ſecret reſerves in my heart, notwithſtanding that face and appearance of zeal which I put on? Certainly if there be any ſin that I cannot part with, any ſuffering for Chriſt which I reſolve againſt in my heart; I am none of his diſciples, my heart is not right with God, the ſearcher of hearts himſelf being Judge, Luke xiv. 26, 27.

*Queſt.* 4. What conſcience do I make of ſecret ſins? Do I mourn for a vain heart, wandering thoughts, ſpiritual deadneſs? And do I conſcientiouſly abſtain from the practice of ſecret ſins, when there is no danger of diſcovery, no fear of forfeiting my reputation by it? Is it God's eye, or man's, that awes me from the commiſſion of ſin? Certainly, if I allow myſelf in ſecret ſins, I am not of the number of God's upright people, whoſe ſpirits are of a contrary temper to mine, Pſal. cxix. 113. and Pſal. xii. 12.

SECT. V.

I Will ſhut up all with ſive or ſix concluding counſels, (which the Lord impreſs upon the heart of him that writes, and thoſe that ſhall read them) to preſerve and antidote the ſoul againſt the dangerous inſinuation and leaven of hypocriſy.

Counſel 1. *Intreat the Lord night and day, for a renewed and right ſpirit.* All the helps and directions in the world will not antidote and preſerve you from hypocriſy; nothing will be found able to keep you right, till ſanctification hath firſt ſet you right. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I will put my Spirit within you; and cauſe you to walk "in my ſtatutes."

A bowl may keep by a ſtrait line, ſo long as the impreſſed force of the hand that delivered it remains ſtrong upon it; but as that wears off, ſo its motion fails, and its own biaſs ſways and turns it. A fright of conſcience, a pang of warm affection, or the influence of ſome great example or a good education, may influence an unrenewed ſoul, and puſh it on in the way of religion for a ſeaſon; but the heart ſo influenced, muſt, and will return to its own natural courſe again. And I think there wants nothing but time, or a ſuitable temptation, to diſcover the true temper of many a profeſſor's ſpirit: pray, therefore, as that holy man did, Pſal. cxix. 80. "Let my heart be "ſound in thy ſtatutes, that I be not aſhamed."

Counſel 2. *Always ſuſpect and examine your ends in what you do.* Sincerity and hypocriſy lie much in your ends and deſigns; as they are, ſo are you. The intentions of the heart lie deep; a man may do the ſame action to an holy end, and his perſon and ſervice be accepted with God; which another doing for a corrupt end, it may be reckoned his ſin, and both his perſon and ſervice be abhorred by the Lord. We find two men riding in one chariot, and both of them concerned in the ſame expedition, Jehu, the ſon of Nimſhi, and Jonadab, the ſon of Rechab, 2 Kings x. 15, 23. But though the work they engaged in was one, and the ſame, yet the different ends they aimed at, made the ſame action an excellent duty in Jonadab, and an act of vile hypocriſy in Jehu: *Idem quod duo faciunt, non eſt idem:* It was the ſaying of a good ſoul, commended for a good action: the work indeed is good, but I fear the ends of it. Self ends are creeping, and inſinuating things into the beſt actions.

Counſel 3. *Scare yourſelves with the daily fears of the ſin that is in, and the miſery that will follow hypocriſy.* Look upon it as the moſt odious ſin in the eyes of God and men; to want holineſs is bad enough, but to diſſimulate and pretend it, when we have it not, is double impiety: to make religion, the moſt glorious thing in the world, a mere ſtirrup to preferment, and a covert to wickedneſs: O how vile a thing is it! God made Chriſt a ſacrifice for ſin, and the hypocrite will make him a cloak for ſin.

And as to the puniſhments that follow it, they are ſuitable to the nature of the ſin; for as hypocriſy is out of meaſure ſinful, ſo the re-

ward and puniſhment of it will be out of meaſure dreadful. Matth. xxiv. 51. "He ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion "with hypocrites; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth."

Counſel 4. *Be daily at work in the mortification of thoſe luſts that breed hypocriſy.* It is plain, without much ſifting, that pride, vain-glory, ſelf-love, and a worldly heart, are the ſeeds out of which this curſed plant ſprings up in the ſouls of men. Dig but to the root, you ſhall certainly find theſe things there; and till the Lord help you to kill and mortify theſe, hypocriſy will ſpring up in all your duties to God, and in all your converſes with men.

Counſel 5. *Attend the native voice of your own conſciences in the day of ſickneſs, fear or trouble, and take ſpecial notice of its checks or upbraidings, which like a ſtitch in your ſide, will gird at ſuch times:* Commonly in that lies your greateſt danger: Beware of that evil which conſcience brands and marks at ſuch times, whether it be your living in the practice of ſome ſecret ſin, or in the neglect of ſome known duty: Theſe frights of conſcience mark out the corruption, wherein your danger moſtly lies.

Counſel 6. *Let us all that profeſs religion be uniform and ſteady in the profeſſion and practice of it, without politic reſerves, and bye-ends.* O take heed of this Laodicean neutrality and indifferency which Chriſt hates: Be ſure your ground be good, and then be ſure you ſtand your ground. The religion of time-ſervers is but hypocriſy: They have ſluices in their conſciences which they can open or ſhut as occaſion requires; Every fox will have at leaſt two holes to his den, that if one be ſtopt, he may eſcape at the other. The hypocrite poiſeth himſelf ſo evenly in a mediocrity, that, as it is ſaid of Baldwin, Let Anthony win, let Auguſtus win, all is one: So let Chriſt win, or let Antichriſt win, he hopes to make every wind that can blow ſerviceable to waft him to the port of his own intereſt.

The hypocrite hath always more of the moon than of the ſun; little light, many ſpots, and frequent changes: It is eaſier to him to bow to the croſs, than to bear the croſs; to ſin, than to ſuffer.

Our own ſtory tells us of a poor ſimple woman that lived both in the reign of queen Mary and queen Elizabeth, and would conſtantly ſay her prayers both in Latin and Engliſh, that ſhe might be ſure to pleaſe one ſide or other; and let God, ſaid ſhe, take which likes him beſt. What is noted as an act of ridiculous ſimplicity in her, the time-ſerving hypocrite accounts a point of deep policy in himſelf.

The times under Diocleſian were Pagan; under Conſtantine, Chriſtian; under Conſtantius, Arian; under Julian, Apoſtate; and under Jovian, Chriſtian again: And all this within the ſpace of ſeventy years, the age of one man. O what ſhifting and ſhuffling was there among the men of that generation! The changes of weather ſhew the unſoundneſs of men's bodies, and the changes of times, the unſoundneſs of their ſouls.

Chriſtian, if ever thou wilt manifeſt and maintain thine integrity,

be a man but of one deſign, and be ſure that be an honeſt and good deſign, to ſecure heaven, whatever becomes of earth: To hold faſt integrity, whatever thou art forced to let go for its ſake.

Take heed of pious frauds: Certainly it was the devil that firſt married theſe two words together, for they never did, nor can agree betwixt themſelves, nor was ever ſuch a marriage made in heaven.

Never ſtudy to model religion, and the exerciſes thereof, in a conſiſtency with, or ſubſerviency to your fleſhly intereſts: If your religion be but a mock religion, your reward ſhall be but a mock heaven, that is a real hell.

O the vanity and inutility of theſe projects and deſigns! Men ſtrive to caſt themſelves into ſuch modes, and ſtint themſelves to ſuch meaſures of religion, as they think will beſt promote, or ſecure their earthly intereſts: but it often falls out, contrary to their expectation, that their deep policies are ridiculous follies; they become the grief and ſhame of their friends, and the ſcorn and ſong of their enemies. And often it fares with them, as with him that placed himſelf in the middle of the table, where he could neither reach the diſh above him, nor that below him, *Eſuriunt medii, &c.* and, which is the very beſt of it, if earthly intereſt be accommodated by ſinful neutrality, and a Laodicean indifferency in religion, yet no good man ſhould once feel a temptation to embrace it, except he think what is wanting in the ſweetneſs of his ſleep, may be fully recompenſed to him by the ſtatelineſs of his bed, and richer furniture of his chamber; I mean that a fuller and higher condition in the world, can make him amends for the loſs of his inward peace, and the quiet repoſe of a good conſcience: Theſe bye-ends and ſelf-intereſts are the little paſſages through which hypocriſy creeps in upon the profeſſors of religion.

O let this be your rejoicing, which was Paul's, "The teſtimony of "your conſcience, that in all ſincerity and godly ſimplicity, not in "fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, you have had your con-"verſation in this world," 2 Cor. i. 12.

Let that be your daily prayer and cry to heaven, which was David's, Pſal. xxv. 21. "Let integrity and uprightneſs preſerve me, "for I wait on thee."

Counſel 7. *Keep your hearts day and night under the awe of God's all-ſeeing eye:* Remember he beholds all your ways, and ponders all your thoughts; how covertly ſoever hypocriſy may be carried for a time, all muſt and will out at laſt, Luke xii. 3. Secreſy is the main inducement to hypocriſy, but it will fall out with the hypocrite, as it did with Ottocar the king of Bohemia, who refuſed to do homage to Rodolphus the emperor, till at laſt chaſtiſed with war, he was content to do him homage privately in a tent: But the tent was ſo contrived by the emperor's ſervants, that by drawing one cord, it was taken all away; and ſo Ottocar was preſented on his knees doing homage in view of three armies.

*Reader*, Awe thy heart with God's eye, know that he will bring *every ſecret thing into judgment.* Thus did Job, and it preſerved him, Job xxxi. 1, 4. Thus did David, and it preſerved him, Pſal. xviii. 21, 22, 23. Thus do thou alſo, and it will preſerve thee blameleſs and without guile to the day of Chriſt.

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# TOKEN FOR MOURNERS:

OR THE

## ADVICE OF CHRIST TO A DISTRESSED MOTHER,

*BEWAILING THE DEATH OF HER DEAR AND ONLY SON:*

Wherein the Boundaries of Sorrow are duly fixed, Exceſſes reſtrained, the common Pleas anſwered, and divers Rules for the ſupport of GOD's afflicted Ones preſcribed.

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## THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

*To his dearly beloved brother and ſiſter, Mr J. C. and Mrs E. C. the Author wiſheth grace, mercy, and peace.*

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE double tye of nature and grace, beſide the many endearing paſſages that for ſo many years have linked and glewed our affections ſo intimately, cannot but beget a tender ſympathy in me with you under all your troubles, and make me ſay of every affliction which befals you, Half's mine. I find it is with our affections as with the ſtrings of muſical inſtruments exactly ſet at the ſame height, if one be touched, the other trembles, though it be at ſome diſtance.

Our affections are one, and ſo in a great meaſure have been our afflictions alſo. You cannot forget that in the years lately paſt, the Almighty viſited my tabernacle with the rod, and in one year cut off from it the root, and the branch, the tender mother, and the only ſon. What the effects of thoſe ſtrokes, or rather of my own unmortified paſſions were, I have felt, and you and others have heard. Surely I was as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke. Yea, I may ſay with them, Lam. iii. 19, 20. "Remembering mine affliction and my "miſery, the wormwood and the gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in "remembrance, and is humbled in me."

I dare not ſay that ever I felt my heart diſcontentedly riſing and ſwelling againſt God; no, I could ſtill juſtify him, when I moſt ſenſibly ſmarted by his hand: If he had plunged me into a ſea of ſorrow, yet I could ſay in all that ſea of ſorrow, there is not a drop of injuſtice: But it was the over-heating and over-acting of my fond and unmortified affections and paſſions that made ſo ſad impreſſions upon my body, and caſt me under thoſe diſtempers which ſoon embittered all my remaining comforts to me.

It was my earneſt deſire, ſo ſoon as I had ſtrength and opportunity for ſo great a journey, to viſit you, that ſo, if the Lord had pleaſed, I might both refreſh and be refreſhed by you, after all my ſad and diſconſolate days. And you cannot imagine what content and pleaſure I projected in that viſit; but it proved to us, as all other comforts of the ſame kind ordinarily do, more in expectation than in fruition: For how ſoon after our joyful meeting and embraces did the Lord overcaſt and darken our day, by ſending death into your tabernacle, to take away the deſire of your eyes with a ſtroke! to crop off that ſweet and only bud from which we promiſed ourſelves ſo much comfort. But no more of that, I fear I am gone too far already. It is not my deſign to exaſperate your troubles, but to heal them; and for that purpoſe have I ſent you theſe papers, which I hope may be of uſe both to you and many others in your condition, ſince they are the after-fruits of my own troubles; things that I have not commended to you from another hand, but which I have, in ſome meaſure, proved and taſted in my own trials.

But I will not hold you longer here; I have only a few things to deſire for, and from you, and I have done.

The things I deſire are,

*Firſt*, That you will not be too haſty to get off the yoke which God hath put upon your neck. Remember when your child was in the womb, neither of you deſired it ſhould be delivered thence till God's appointed time was fully come; and now that you travail again with ſorrow for its death: O deſire not to be delivered from your ſorrows one moment before God's time for your deliverance be fully come alſo. Let patience have its perfect work; that comfort which comes in God's way and ſeaſon, will ſtick by you, and do you good indeed.

*Secondly*, I deſire, that though you and your afflictions had a ſad meeting, yet you and they may have a comfortable parting. If they effect that upon your hearts which God ſent them for, I doubt not but you will give them a fair teſtimony when they go off.

If they obtain God's bleſſing upon them in their operation, ſurely they will have your bleſſing too at their valediction. And what you entertained with fear, you will diſmiſs with praiſe. How ſweet is it to hear the afflicted ſoul ſay, when God is looſing his hands, "It is "good for me that I have been afflicted."

*Thirdly*, I heartily wiſh that theſe ſearching afflictions may make the more ſatisfying diſcoveries; that you may now ſee more of the

evil of ſin, the vanity of the creature, and the fulneſs of Chriſt, than ever you yet ſaw. Afflictions are ſearchers, and put the ſoul upon ſearching and trying its ways, Lam. iii. 14. When our ſin finds us out by affliction, happy are we, if, by the light of affliction we find out ſin. Bleſſed is the man whom God chaſteneth, and teacheth out of his law, Pſal. xciv. 12. There are unſeen cauſes, many times, of our troubles; you have an advantage now to ſift out the ſeeds and principle from which they ſpring.

*Fourthly*, I wiſh that all the love and delight you beſtowed on your little one, may now be placed, to your greater advantage, upon Jeſus Chriſt; and that the ſtream of your affection to him may be ſo much the ſtronger, as there are now fewer channels for it to be divided into. If God will not have any part of your happineſs to lie in children, then let it wholly lie in himſelf. If the jealouſy of the Lord hath removed that which drew away too much of your heart from him, and hath ſpoken by this rod, ſaying, Stand aſide, child, thou art in my way, and filleſt more room in thy parent's hearts than belongs to thee: O then deliver up all to him, and ſay, Lord, take the whole heart entirely, and undividedly to thyſelf. Henceforth let there be no parting, ſharing, or dividing of the affections betwixt God and the creature, let all the ſtreams meet, and centre in thee only.

*Fifthly*, That you may be ſtrengthened with all might in the inner man to all patience, that the peace of God may keep your hearts and minds, labour to bring your hearts to a meek ſubmiſſion to the rod of your Father. We had fathers of the fleſh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; ſhall we not much more be in ſubjection to the Father of ſpirits, and live? Is it comely for children to conteſt and ſtrive with their father? Or is it the way to be freed from the yoke by ſtruggling under it? O that your hearts might be in a like frame with his that ſaid, Lord, thou ſhalt beat, and I will bear. It was a good obſervation that one made, *Anima ſedendo et quieſcendo fit ſapiens*: The ſoul grows wiſe by ſitting ſtill and quiet under the rod. And the apoſtle calls thoſe excellent fruits which the ſaints gather from their ſanctified afflictions, "The peaceable "fruits of righteouſneſs," Heb. xii. 11.

*Laſtly*, My heart's deſire and prayer to God for you, is, that you may die daily to all viſible enjoyments, and by theſe frequent converſes with death in your family, you may be prepared for your own change and diſſolution, when it ſhall come.

O friends! how many graves have you and I ſeen opened for our dear relations? How oft hath death come up into your windows, and ſummoned the delight of your eyes? It is but a little while, and we ſhall go to them; we and they are diſtinguiſhed but by ſhort intervals.

*Tranſivere patres, ſimul hinc tranſibimus omnes.*

Our dear parents are gone, our lovely and deſirable children are

gone, our boſom relations, that were as our own ſouls, are gone; and do not all theſe warning-knocks at our doors acquaint us, that we muſt prepare to follow ſhortly after them?

O that by theſe things our own death might be both more eaſy and familiar to us; the oftener it viſits us, the better we ſhould be acquainted with it; and the more of our beloved relations it removes before us, the leſs of either ſnare or intanglement remains for us when our turn comes.

My dear friends, my fleſh and my blood, I beſeech you, for religion's ſake, for your own ſake, and for my ſake, whoſe comfort is in great part bound up in your proſperity and welfare, that you read frequently, ponder ſeriouſly, and apply believingly theſe ſcripture conſolations and directions, which, in ſome haſte, I have gathered for your uſe; and the God of all conſolation be with you.

*I am,*

*Your moſt endeared Brother,*

JOHN FLAVEL.

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A

# *Token for Mourners.*

LUKE vii. 13.

*And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid to her, Weep not.*

TO be above the ſtroke of paſſion, is a condition equal to angels: to be in a ſtate of ſorrow without the ſenſe of ſorrow, is a diſpoſition beneath beaſts: but duly to regulate our ſorrows, and bound our paſſions under the rod, is the wiſdom, duty, and excellency of a Chriſtian. He that is without natural affections, is deſervedly ranked amongſt the worſt of heathens; and he that is able rightly to manage them, deſerves to be numbered with the beſt of Chriſtians. Though when we are ſanctified we put on the Divine nature, yet, till we are glorified, we put not off the infirmities of our human nature.

Whilſt we are within the reach of troubles, we cannot be without the danger, nor ought not to be without the fear of ſin; and it is as hard for us to eſcape ſin, being in adverſity, as becalming in proſperity.

How apt are we to tranſgreſs the bounds, both of reaſon and religion, under a ſharp affliction, appears, as in moſt men's experience, ſo

in this woman's example, to whoſe exceſſive ſorrow Chriſt puts a ſtop in the text: "He ſaw her, and had compaſſion on her, and "ſaid to her, "Weep not."

The lamentations and wailings of this diſtreſſed mother, moved the tender compaſſions of the Lord in beholding them, and ſtirred up more pity in his heart for her, than could be in her heart for her dear and only ſon.

In the words we are to conſider both the condition of the woman, and the counſel of Chriſt with reſpect unto it.

*Firſt*, The condition of this woman, which appears to be very dolorous and diſtreſſed; her groans and tears moved and melted the very heart of Chriſt to hear and behold them: "When he ſaw her, "he had compaſſion on her."

How ſad an hour it was with her when Chriſt met her, appears by what is ſo diſtinctly remarked by the evangeliſt, ver. 12. where it is ſaid, "Now when they came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, "there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother, and "ſhe was a widow, and much people of the city was with her."

In this one verſe, divers heart-piercing circumſtances of this affliction are noted.

*Firſt*, It was the *death of a ſon**. To bury a child, any child, muſt needs rend the heart of a tender parent; for what are children but the parent multiplied? A child is a part of the parent made up in another ſkin: But to lay a ſon in the grave, a ſon who continues the name, and ſupports the family; this was ever accounted a very great affliction.

*Secondly*, This ſon was not carried from the cradle to the coffin, nor ſtripped out of its ſwathing, to be wrapped in its winding-cloth. Had he died in his infancy, before he had engaged affection, or raiſed expectation, the affliction had not been ſo pungent, and cutting as now it was: death ſmote the ſon in the flower and prime of his time. He was a *man*, (ſaith the evangeliſt) ver. 12. *a young man*, (as Chriſt calls him) ver 14. he was now arrived at that age which made him capable of yielding his mother all that comfort which had been the expectation and hope of many years, and the reward and fruit of many cares and labours: yet then, when the endearments were greateſt, and her hopes higheſt, even in the flower of his age he is cut off.

Thus Baſil bewailed the death of his ſon: ‡ 'I once had a ſon,

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* Φιλιας μεγιστος δεσμος ειναι τεκνων γονεις, i. e. To be parents to children, is the firmeſt tye of affection. *Græc. Com.*

† He died in his youth, and was therefore the more to be lamented, becauſe he was cut off in the flower of his age, unto which he was conducted from a child, by the great care and labour of his parents. *Dion. Cat. on the place.*

‡ *Filius mihi erat, adoleſcens, ſolus vitæ ſucceſſor, ſolatium ſenectutis, gloria generis, flos æqualium, fulcrum domus, ætatem gratioſiſſimam agebat; hic raptus periit, qui paulo ante jucundam vocem edebat, et jucundiſſimum ſpectaculum parentis oculis erat.*

‹ who was a young man, my only ſucceſſor, the ſolace of my age, ‹ the glory of his kind, the prop of my family, arrived to the endear- ‹ ing age: then was he ſnatched away from me by death, whoſe love- ‹ ly voice but a little before I heard, who lately was a pleaſant ſpec- ‹ tacle to his parent.

Reader, if this hath been thine own condition, as it hath been his that writes it, I need ſay no more to convince thee that it was a ſorrowful ſtate indeed, Chriſt met this tender mother in.

*Thirdly*, And which is yet more, he was not only a ſon, but an only ſon: ſo you find, in ver. 12. "He was the only ſon of his "mother;" * one in whom all her hopes and comforts, of that kind, were bound up. For, *Omnis in Aſcanio, ſtat chari cura parentis*, Virgil. All her affections were contracted into this one object. If we have never ſo many children, we know not which of them to ſpare; if they ſtand, like olive plants about our tables, it would grieve us to ſee the leaſt twig amongſt them broken down. But ſurely the death of one out of many, is much more tolerable than all in one. †

Hence it is noted in ſcripture as the greateſt of earthly ſorrows, Jer. vi. 26. "O daughter of my people, gird thee with ſackcloth, "and wallow thyſelf in aſhes. Make thee mourning as for an only "ſon, moſt bitter lamentation." Yea, ſo deep and penetrating is this grief, that the Holy Ghoſt borrows it to expreſs the deepeſt ſpiritual troubles by it, Zech. xii. 10. "They ſhall mourn for him, (name- "ly Chriſt, whom they pierced) as one mourneth for an only ſon."

*Fourthly*, And yet, to heighten the affliction, it is ſuperaded, ver. 12. "And ſhe was a widow." So that the ſtaff of her age, on which ſhe leaned, was broken: ‡ ſhe had now none left to comfort or aſſiſt her, in her helpleſs, comfortleſs ſtate of widowhood; which is a condition not only void of comfort, but expoſed to oppreſſion, and contempt.

Yea, and being a widow, the whole burthen lay upon her alone; ſhe had not an huſband to comfort her, as Elkanah did Hannah, in 1 Sam. i. 8. "Why weepeſt thou, and why is thy heart grieved? "Am not I better to thee than ten ſons?" This would have been a great relief; but her huſband was dead, as well as her ſon, both gone, and ſhe only ſurviving, to lament the loſs of thoſe comforts that once ſhe had. Her calamities came not ſingle, but one after another, and this reviving, and aggravating the former. This was her caſe, and condition, when the Lord met her.

*Secondly*, Let us conſider the counſel which Chriſt gave her, with

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* She would have borne his death more patiently, had he not been an only ſon; or if ſhe had had but another left behind him, to mitigate her ſorrow. *Ambroſe.*

† As there is nothing dearer than an only ſon, ſo that grief upon the account of his death, muſt be the greateſt of all. *Carth. on the place.*

‡ He was moſt dear to her on a twofold account, both becauſe he was her only ſon, and that he was the comfort and ſupport of her widowhood. *Piſcator on the place.*

reſpect to this, her ſad, and ſorrowful caſe; " And when the Lord " ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto her, Weep " not." Relieving and ſupporting words; wherein we ſhall conſider,

1. The occaſion.
2. The motive.
3. The counſel itſelf.

1. The occaſion of it, and that was his ſeeing of her. This meeting at the gate of the city, how accidental, and occaſional ſoever it ſeems, yet without doubt, it was providentially ſuited to the work intended to be wrought: The eye of his omniſcience foreſaw her, and this meeting was by him deſigned as an occaſion of that famous miracle which he wrought upon the young man. Chriſt hath a quick eye to diſcern poor, mourning, and diſconſolate creatures: And though he be now in heaven, and ſtands out of our ſight, ſo that we ſee him not; yet he ſees us, and his eye (which is upon all our troubles) ſtill affects his heart, and moves his bowels for us.

2. The motive ſtirring him up to give this relieving, and comfortable counſel to her, was his own compaſſion: She neither expected, nor deſired it from him; but ſo full of tender pity was the Lord towards her, that he prevents her with unexpected conſolation: Her heart was nothing ſo full of compaſſion for her ſon, as Chriſt was for her; he bore our infirmities, even natural, as well as moral ones, in the days of his fleſh; and though he be now exalted to the higheſt glory, yet ſtill he continues as merciful as ever, and as apt to be touched with the ſenſe of our miſeries, Heb. iv. 15.

*Laſtly*, The counſel itſelf, *Weep not;* herein fulfilling the office of a comforter to them that mourn, whereunto he was anointed, Iſa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. Yet the words are not an abſolute prohibition of tears, and ſorrow; he doth not condemn all mourning as ſinful, or all expreſſions of grief for dead relations as uncomely; no, Chriſt would not have his people ſtupid, and inſenſate; he only prohibits the exceſſes, and extravagancies of our ſorrows for the dead, that it ſhould not be ſuch a mourning for the dead as is found among the *heathen*, who ſorrow without meaſure, becauſe without hope, being ignorant of that grand relief by the reſurrection, which the goſpel reveals.

The reſurrection of her ſon from the dead, is the ground upon which Chriſt builds her conſolation, and relief; well might he ſay, *Weep not*, when he intended quickly to remove the cauſe of her tears, by reſtoring him again to life.

Now, though there be ſomewhat in this caſe extraordinary, and peculiar, for few or none that carry their dead children to the grave, may expect to receive them again from the dead immediately, by a ſpecial reſurrection, as ſhe did: I ſay, this is not to be expected by any that now loſe their relations: the occaſion and reaſon of ſuch miraculous, ſpecial reſurrections, being removed, by a ſufficient and full evidence, and confirmation of Chriſt's divine power and Godhead;

yet thoſe that now bury their relations, if they be ſuch as die in Chriſt, have as good and ſufficient reaſon to moderate their paſſions, as this mourner had, and do as truly come within the reach and compaſs of this Chriſt's comfortable, and ſupporting counſel, *Weep not*, as ſhe did: For do but conſider, what of ſupport or comfort can a particular and preſent reſurrection from the dead give us, more than that it is, and as it is, a ſpecimen, handſel, or pledge of the general reſurrection? It is not the returning of the ſoul to its body, to live an animal life again, in this world of ſin and ſorrow, and ſhortly after to undergo the agonies, and pains of death again, that is in itſelf any ſuch privilege as may afford much comfort to the perſon raiſed, or his relations: It is no privilege to the perſon raiſed, for it returns him from reſt to trouble, from the harbour back again into the ocean. It is matter of trouble to many dying ſaints, to hear of the likelihood of their returning again, when they are got ſo nigh to heaven.

It was once the caſe of a godly miniſter of this nation, who was much troubled at his return, and ſaid, I am like a ſheep driven out of the ſtorm almoſt to the fold, and then driven back into the ſtorm again; or a weary traveller that is come near his home, and then muſt go back to fetch ſomewhat he had forgotten; or an apprentice, whoſe time is almoſt expired, and then muſt begin a new term.

But to die, and then return again from the dead, hath leſs of privilege, than to return only from the brink of the grave; for the ſick hath not yet felt the agonies and laſt ſtruggles, or pangs of death; but ſuch have felt them once, and muſt feel them again; they muſt die twice, before they can be happy once; and, beſides, during the little time they ſpend on earth betwixt the firſt and ſecond diſſolution, there is a perfect αμνησια, forgetfulneſs, and inſenſibleneſs, of all that which they ſaw, or enjoyed, in their eſtate of ſeparation: It being neceſſary, both for them and others, that it ſhould be ſo. For themſelves it is neceſſary, that they may be content to live, and endure the time of ſeparation from that bleſſed and ineffable ſtate, quietly and patiently;* and for others, that they may live by faith, and not by ſenſe; and build upon divine, and not human authority and report.

So that here you ſee, their agonies and pangs are doubled, and yet their lives not ſweetened by any ſenſe of their happineſs, which returns and remains with them; and therefore it can be no ſuch privilege to them.

And for their relations: Though it be ſome comfort to receive them again from the dead; yet the conſideration that they are returned to them into the ſtormy ſea, to partake of new ſorrows and troubles, from which they were lately free: And in a ſhort time they muſt



* *Victuroſque dii celant, ut vivere durent.*
How long or ſhort men live is kept a myſtery,
To make us both live well and leſs afraid to die.

part with them again, and feel the double ſorrows of a parting pull, which others feel but once;* ſurely ſuch a particular reſurrection, conſidered in itſelf, is no ſuch ground of comfort as at firſt we might imagine it to be.

It remains, then, that the ground of all ſolid comfort and relief, againſt the death of our relations, lies in the general and laſt reſurrection, and what is in a particular one, is but, as it were, a ſpecimen* and evidence of the general: and there the apoſtle places our relief, 1 Theſ. iv. 17. that we ſhall ſee, and enjoy them again, at the Lord's coming. And ſurely this is more than if (with this mother in the text) we ſhould preſently receive them from the dead, as ſhe did her ſon: And if we judge not ſo, it is becauſe our hearts are carnal, and meaſure things rather by time and ſenſe, than by faith and eternity.

Thus you ſee the counſel, with its ground, which, for the moſt part, is common to other Chriſtian mourners with her; the difference being but inconſiderable, and of little advantage.

Here, then, you find many aggravations of ſorrow meeting together; a ſon, an only ſon, is carrying to the grave; yet Chriſt commands the penſive mother not to mourn.

Hence we note,

Doct. *That Chriſtians ought to moderate their ſorrows for their dead relations, how many afflicting circumſtances, and aggravations ſoever meet together in their death.*

It is as common with men, yea, with good men, to exceed in their ſorrows for dead relations†, as it is to exceed in their love and delights to living relations; and both of the one, and the other, we may ſay, as they ſay of waters, It is hard to confine them within their bounds. It is therefore grave advice which the apoſtle delivers in this caſe, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. "But this I ſay, brethren, the "time is ſhort; it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as "though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept "not; and thoſe that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not." As if he had ſaid, the floating world is near its port;‡ God hath contracted the ſails of man's life; it is but a point of time we have to live, and ſhortly it will not be a point to chuſe whether we had wives or not, children or not. All theſe are time-eaten things, and before the expected fruit of theſe comforts be ripe, we ourſelves may be rotten. It is therefore an high point of wiſdom to look upon things which ſhortly will not be, as if already they were not, and to behave ourſelves, in the loſs of theſe carnal enjoyments, as the natural man behaves himſelf in the uſe of ſpiritual ordinances; he hears as if he heard not, and we ſhould weep as if we wept not; their affections are a little moved, ſometimes by ſpiritual things, but they never lay

* Therein we have a noble ſpecimen of the future reſurrection. *Calvin on the place.*

† Whatever we love ardently while we have it, we lament bitterly when we loſe it. *Greg mor.*

‡ Καιρος συνεσταλμενος, i. e. the time is contracted.

them ſo to heart, as to be broken-hearted for the ſin they hear of, or deeply affected with the glory revealed. We alſo ought to be ſenſible of the ſtroke of God upon our dear relations; but yet ſtill we muſt weep, as if we wept not; that is, we muſt keep due bounds, and moderation in our ſorrows, and not to be too deeply concerned for theſe dying, ſhort-lived things.

To this purpoſe the apoſtle exhorts, Heb. xii. 5. "My ſon, diſ-"piſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art "rebuked of him." Theſe are two extremes, deſpiſing, and fainting: when God is correcting, to ſay, I do not regard it, let God take all, if he will; if my eſtate muſt go, let it go; if my children die, let them die: this is to deſpiſe the Lord's chaſtening; and God cannot bear it, that we ſhould bear it thus lightly.

There is alſo another extreme, and that is fainting: if, when goods are taken away, the heart be taken away, and when children die, then the ſpirit of the parent dies alſo; this is fainting under the rod. Thou lamenteſt, ſaith Seneca, thy deceaſed friend; but I would not have thee grieve beyond what is meet: that thou ſhouldſt not grieve at all, I dare not require thee; tears may be excuſed, if they do not exceed. Let thine eyes, therefore, be neither wholly dry, nor let them overflow: weep thou mayeſt, but wail thou muſt not.

Happy man, that ſtill keeps the golden bridle of moderation upon his paſſions, and affections, and ſtill keeps the poſſeſſion of himſelf, whatſoever he loſe the poſſeſſion of.

Now the method in which I propoſe to proceed, ſhall be,

1. To diſcover the ſigns,
2. To diſſuade from the ſin,
3. To remove the pleas,
4. To propoſe the cure of immoderate ſorrow.

*Firſt*, I ſhall give you the ſigns of immoderate ſorrow, and ſhew you when it exceeds its bounds, and becomes ſinful, even a ſorrow to be ſorrowed for; and, for clearneſs ſake, I will firſt allow what may be allowed to the Chriſtian mourner, and then you will the better diſcern wherein the exceſs and ſinfulneſs of your ſorrow lies.

And, *Firſt*, How much ſoever we cenſure, and condemn immoderate ſorrow; *yet the afflicted muſt be allowed an awakened, and tender ſenſe of the Lord's afflicting hand upon them.* It is no virtue to bear what we do not feel; yea, it is a moſt unbecoming temper, not to tremble when God is ſmiting.

The Lord ſaith to Moſes, in the caſe of Miriam, Numb. xii. 24. "If her father had ſpit in her face, ſhould ſhe not be aſhamed ſeven "days?" The face is the table, and ſeat of beauty and honour; but when it is ſpit upon, it is made the ſink of ſhame. Had her own father ſpit upon her face when ſhe had diſpleaſed him, would ſhe not have gone aſide, as one aſhamed by ſuch a rebuke, and not have ſhewed her face to him again in ſeven days? How much more ſhould ſhe take it to heart, and be ſenſible of this rebuke of mine, who have

filled her face with leprous ſpots, the ſigns of my diſpleaſure againſt her? Surely God will be aſhamed of thoſe that are not aſhamed when he rebukes them.

It is not magnanimity, but ſtupidity, to make light of God's corrections; and for this the afflicted are ſmartly taxed, Jer. v. 3. "I "have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved." When God ſmote Job in his perſon, children, and eſtate, he aroſe and rent his mantle, and put duſt upon his head, to ſhew he was not ſenſeleſs and unaffected, and yet bleſſed the afflicting God; which, as plainly ſhewed he was not contumacious and unſubmiſſive.

Secondly, *We muſt allow the mourning, afflicted ſoul, a due and comely expreſſion of his grief and ſorrow in his complaints both to God and men.*

It is much more becoming a Chriſtian, ingenuouſly to open his troubles, than ſuddenly to ſmother them. There is no ſin in complaining to God, but much wickedneſs in complaining of him. Griefs are eaſed by groans and heart-preſſures relieved by utterance. This was David's courſe and conſtant way, who was a man of afflictions, Pſalm cxlii. 2, 3. "I poured out my complaint before him, I "ſhewed before him my trouble; when my ſpirit was overwhelmed "within me, then thou knoweſt my path."

To whom ſhould children go, but to their father, to make their moan? Whence may they expect relief and comfort but from him? The 102d Pſalm is intituled, "A Pſalm for the afflicted, when he is "overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord."

And happy were it if every afflicted ſoul would chuſe this way to expreſs his ſorrows. Did we complain more to God, he would complain leſs of us, and quickly abate the matters of our complaint. O you cannot think how moving, how melting, how prevailing it is with God, when his poor, burdened, and afflicted people, in a day of diſtreſs and deſpondency, when deep calleth unto deep, and one wave drives on another, then for the oppreſſed ſoul, with humility, filial confidence, and faith, to turn itſelf to the Lord, and thus beſpeak him:

'Father, what ſhall I do? My ſoul is greatly bowed down by 'trouble; I am full to the brim, my vain heart hath looked for 'relief this way and that way, but none comes; every door of com-'fort is ſhut up againſt me: Thou haſt multiplied my ſorrows, and 'renewed my witneſſes againſt me: Comfort is removed from my 'outward, and peace from my inner man; ſharp afflictions without, 'and bitter reflections within. O Lord, I am oppreſſed, undertake 'for me. Fathers of the fleſh pity their diſtreſſed children, when 'they complain to them; and wilt not thou, O Lord, whoſe com-'paſſions as far exceed creature-compaſſions as the ſea exceeds a 'drop; O my Father! pity me, ſupport me, deliver me."

O how acceptable is this to God! how advantageous to the ſoul!

We may alſo make our complaint to men. So did Job, chap. xix. ver. 21. "Have pity, have pity on me, O ye my friends, for the hand

" of God hath touched me." And it is a mercy if we have any friends that are wiſe, faithful, and experienced; they are born for ſuch a time as this, Prov. xvii. 17. but be they what they will, they cannot pity as God, relieve and ſuccour as he; and oftentimes we may ſay with Job, chap. xxi. ver. 4. " As for me, is my complaint to men? " And if it were, why ſhould not my ſpirit be troubled?" q. d. What great advantage can I get by theſe complaints? I may burden the heart of my friend, but how little doth that eaſe my own? Yet the very opening of the heart to an experienced, tender Chriſtian, is ſome relief, and the engaging his prayers is more. Thus far you moan ſafely, in all this there is no danger.

Thirdly, *The afflicted perſon may (ordinarily) accuſe, judge, and condemn himſelf, for being the cauſe and procurer of his own troubles.* He may lawfully be diſcontented and vexed with himſelf for his own folly, when the iniquity of his heels compaſſeth him about. And truly it is but ſeldom that any great affliction befals a gracious perſon, but he ſaw the need of ſuch a rod before he felt it.

Hath God ſmitten thy child, or friend, and didſt thou not foreſee ſome ſharp trial coming? Did not thy fond, ſecure, carnal temper, need ſuch a ſcourge to awaken, quicken, and purge thee? Or, if you did not foreſee it, it is now your duty to ſearch and examine yourſelves. So the church, in her affliction, reſolved, Lam. iii. 40. " Let us ſearch " and try our ways." When God is ſmiting, we ſhould be a ſearching: Surely our iniquities will enquire after us if we will not enquire after them: Yea, in the day of affliction, a gracious ſoul is inquiſitive about nothing more than the procuring and provoking cauſe of his troubles. Job x. 2. " Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with " me;" q. d. Lord, what ſpecial corruption is it that this rod is ſent to rebuke? What ſinful neglect doth it come to humble me for? O diſcover it now to me, and recover me now from it.

And having found the root and cauſe of their troubles, ingenuous ſouls will ſhame themſelves for it, and give glory to God by an humble ſubmiſſion and vindication of the equity of his proceedings. Job vii. 20. " I have ſinned, what ſhall I do unto thee, thou preſerver of " men?" He thinks it no ſhame freely to diſcover unto God, and deeply to abaſe himſelf before him for his folly.

I remember a choice note that * Mr Brightman hath in his commentary upon the Canticles.

' Holy men, ſaith he, after their hearts are renewed by repentance, are not aſhamed to remember and confeſs their ſlips and ſhameful falls to the glory of God; for they account that the glory which ſuch confeſſions take from them, is not loſt, whilſt it goes to the glory of God.' If his glory may riſe out of our ſhame, how willing

* *Nec enim pudet ſanctos viros, poſtquam renovati corde fuerint, per reſipiſcentiam, lapſus ſui & dedecoris ad Dei gloriam meminiſſe. Nihil nobis decedit, quod cedit in illius honorem* Bright man in Cant. c. 1. v. 4. p. 11.

ſhould we be to take ſuch ſhame to us? Holy David was not aſhamed to acknowledge, Pſal. xxxviii. 5. "My wounds ſtink, and are corrupted, becauſe of my fooliſhneſs." He is the wiſeſt man that thus befools himſelf before God.

It is true, God may afflict from prerogative, or for trial; but we may always ſee cauſe enough in ourſelves, and it is ſafeſt to charge it upon our own folly.

Laſtly, *The afflicted Chriſtian may, in an humble, ſubmiſſive manner, plead with God, and be earneſt for the removal of the affliction.*

When affliction preſſeth us above ſtrength, when it diſables us for duty, or when it gives advantage to temptation; then we may ſay with David, "Remove thy ſtroke from me, I am conſumed by the blow of thine hand," Pſal. xxxix. 10. Even our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the day of his troubles, poured out his ſoul with ſtrong cries and many tears, ſaying, "Father, if thou be willing, let this cup paſs "from me," Luke xxii. 42. Oppreſſed nature deſires eaſe, and even our renewed nature deſires freedom from thoſe clogs and temptations, which hinder us in duty, or expoſe us to ſnares.

Thus far we may ſafely go.

But ſorrow then becomes ſinful and exceſſive, when,

Firſt, *It cauſeth us to ſlight and deſpiſe all our other mercies, and enjoyments as ſmall things, in compariſon of what we have loſt.*

It often falls out, that the ſetting of one comfort, clouds and benights all the reſt. Our tears for our loſt enjoyments ſo blind our eyes, that we cannot ſee the many other mercies which yet remain: We take ſo much notice of what is gone, that we take little or no notice of what is left. But this is very ſinful, for it involves in it both ignorance, ingratitude, and great provocation.

It is a ſin ſpringing from ignorance. Did we know the deſert of our ſins we ſhould rather wonder to ſee one mercy left, than that twenty are cut off. They that know they have forfeited every mercy, ſhould be thankful that they enjoy any, and patient when they loſe any of their comforts.

Did we know God, even that ſovereign Lord at whoſe diſpoſe our comforts come and go, who can the next moment blaſt all that remain, and turn you into hell afterwards, you would prize the mercies he yet indulges to you, at an higher value. Did you underſtand the fickle, vaniſhing nature of the creature, what a flower, what a bubble it is; O how thankful would you be to find ſo many yet left in your poſſeſſion!

Did you know the caſe of thouſands, as good, yea, better than you, whoſe whole harveſt of comfort in this world is but a handful to the gleanings of the comforts you ſtill enjoy, who in all their lives never were owners of ſuch comfortable enjoyments as you now overlook; ſurely you would not act as you do.

Beſides, what vile ingratitude is in this? What, are all your remaining mercies worth nothing? You have buried a child, a friend;

well, but ſtill you have a huſband, a wife, other children; or if not, you have comfortable accommodations for yourſelves, with health to enjoy them; or if not, yet have you the ordinances of God, it may be, an intereſt in Chriſt and in the covenant, pardon of ſin, and hopes of glory. What, and yet ſink at this rate, as if all your mercies, comforts, and hopes, even in both worlds, were buried in one grave. Muſt Ichabod be written upon your beſt mercies, becauſe mortality is written upon one? Fy, fy, what ſhameful ingratitude is here!

And really, friend, ſuch a carriage as this under the rod is no ſmall provocation to the Lord to go on in judgment, and make a full end of all that remains, ſo that affliction ſhall not riſe up the ſecond time.

What if God, taking notice how little thou regardeſt the many undeſerved favours thou yet poſſeſſeſt, ſhould ſay, well, if thou thinkeſt them not worth the owning, neither do I think them worth the continuing? Go, death, there is a huſband, a wife, other children yet left, ſmite them all. Go, ſickneſs, and remove the health of his body yet left; go, loſſes, and impoveriſh his eſtate yet left; go, reproach, and blaſt his reputation, which is yet ſweet; what would you think of this? And yet, if you be out of Chriſt, you are in danger of a far ſadder ſtroke than any, or all yet mentioned; what if God ſhould ſay, Prizeſt thou not my mercy? Haſt thou no value for my goodneſs and forbearance towards thee? Is it nothing that I have ſpared thee thus long in thy ſins and rebellions? Well then, I will ſtretch out my hand upon thy life, cut off that thread which hath kept thee ſo many years from dropping into hell.

O think then what you have done by provoking the Lord, through your vile ingratitude! It is a dangerous thing to provoke God, when he is already in a way of judgment. And if you be his own people, and ſo out of the danger of this laſt and worſt ſtroke; yet know, you have better mercies to loſe than any you have yet loſt. Should God cloud your ſouls with doubts, let looſe Satan to buffet you, remove joy and peace from your inner man, how ſoon would you be convinced that the funeral of your deareſt friend is but a trifle to this?

Well then, whatever God takes, be ſtill thankful for what he leaves. It was the great ſin of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, that though God had delivered them from their cruel ſervitude in Egypt, miraculouſly fed them in the deſert, and was leading them on to a land flowing with milk and honey; yet as ſoon as any want did but begin to pinch them, preſently all theſe mercies were forgotten and ſlighted, Numb. xiv. 12. "Would to God (ſay they) we had died in Egypt." And, Numb. xi. 6. "There is nothing at all beſide this manna." Beware of this, O ye mourning and afflicted ones. You ſee both the ſin that is in it, and the danger that attends it.

*Secondly*, And no leſs ſinful are our ſorrows, *When they ſo wholly ingulph our hearts, that we either mind not at all, or are little or nothing ſenſible of the public evils and calamities which lie upon the church and people of God.*

Some Chriſtians have ſuch public ſpirits, that the church's troubles ſwallow up their perſonal troubles. Melancthon ſeemed to take little notice of the death of his child which he dearly loved, being almoſt overwhelmed with the miſeries lying on the church.

And it was a good evidence of the graciouſneſs and publicneſs of Eli's ſpirit, who ſitting in the gate anxiouſly waiting for tidings from the army, when the tidings came that Iſrael fled before the Philiſtines, that his two ſons, Hophni and Phinehas were dead, and that the ark of God was taken, juſt at the mention of that word, * *The Ark of God*, before he heard out the whole narration, his mind quickly preſaged the iſſue, he ſunk down and died, 1 Sam. iv. 17, 18. O that was the ſinking, the killing word; had the meſſenger ſtopt at the death of his two ſons, like enough he had ſupported that burden; but the loſs of the ark was more to him than ſons or daughters.

But how few ſuch public ſpirits appear even among profeſſors in this ſelfiſh generation? May we not with the apoſtle complain, Phil. ii. 21. "All ſeek their own, and not the things that are of Chriſt:" Few men have any great cares or deſigns lying beyond the bounds of their own private intereſt. And what we ſay of cares is as true of ſorrows: If a child die, we are ready to die too, but public calamities pierce us not.

How few ſuffer either their domeſtic comforts to be ſwallowed up in the church's troubles, or their domeſtic troubles to be ſwallowed up by the church's mercies! Now when it is thus with us, we little regard what mercies or miſeries lie upon others, but are wholly intent upon our own afflictions, this is a ſinful ſorrow, and ought to be ſorrowed for.

*Thirdly*, Our ſorrows then become ſinful and exorbitant, *When they divert us from, or diſtract us in our duties, ſo that our intercourſe with heaven is ſtopt and interrupted by them.*

How long can we ſit alone muſing upon a dead creature? Here our thoughts eaſily flow; but how hard to fix them upon the living God! when our hearts ſhould be in heaven with our Chriſt, they are in the grave with our dead. May not many afflicted ſouls juſtly complain, that their troubles had taken away their Chriſt from them, (I mean as to ſweet ſenſible communion) and laid the dead child in his room?

Poor creature, ceaſe to weep any longer for thy dead relation, and weep rather for thy dead heart. Is this thy compliance with God's deſign in afflicting thee? What, to grow a greater ſtranger to him than before! Or is this the way to thy cure and comfort in affliction, to refrain prayer, and turn thy back upon God?

Or if thou dareſt not wholly neglect thy duty, yet thy affliction ſpoils the ſucceſs and comfort of it; thy heart is wandering, dead, diſtracted in prayer and meditation, ſo that thou haſt no relief or comfort from it.

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* *Cumque ille nominaſſet arcam Dei:* q. d. *nondum integram, ſed inchoatam audiens narrationem, mente prævolans, et exitum præſagiens ruebat.* Mercoz. in loc.

Rouze up thyſelf, Chriſtian, and conſider this is not right. Surely the rod works not kindly now. What, did thy love to God expire when thy friend expired? Is thy heart as cold in duty, as his body is in the grave?

Hath natural death ſeized him, and ſpiritual deadneſs ſeized thee? Sure then thou haſt more reaſon to lament thy dead heart, than thy dead friend. Divert the ſtream of thy troubles ſpeedily, and labour to recover thyſelf out of this temper quickly; leſt ſad experience ſhortly tell thee, that what thou now mourneſt for is but a trifle to what thou ſhalt mourn for hereafter. To loſe the heavenly warmth and ſpiritual livelineſs of thy affections, is undoubtedly a far more conſiderable loſs, than to loſe the wife of thy boſom, or the ſweeteſt child that ever a tender parent laid in the grave.

Reader, if this be thy caſe, thou haſt reaſon to challenge the firſt place among the mourners. It is better for thee to bury ten ſons, than to remit one degree of love or delight in God. The end of God in ſmiting was to win thy heart nearer to him by removing that which eſtranged it; how then doſt thou croſs the very deſign of God in this diſpenſation? Muſt God then loſe his delight in thy fellowſhip, becauſe thou haſt loſt thine in the creature? Surely, when thy troubles thus accompany thee to thy cloſet, they are ſinful and extravagant troubles.

*Fourthly*, Then you may alſo conclude your ſorrows to be exceſſive and ſinful, *When they ſo overload and oppreſs your bodies, as to endanger your lives, or render them uſeleſs and unfit for ſervice.*

*Worldly ſorrow works death*, 2 Cor. vii. 10. that is, ſorrow after the manner of worldly men*; ſorrow in a mere carnal, natural way, which is not relieved by any ſpiritual reaſonings and conſiderations. This falls ſo heavy ſometimes upon the body, that it ſinks under the weight and is caſt into ſuch diſeaſes as are never more wrought off, or healed in this world. "Heavineſs in the heart of a man makes it "ſtoop," ſaith Solomon, Prov. xii. 25. The ſtouteſt body muſt ſtoop under heart-preſſures.

It is with the mind of man, ſaith one, as with the ſtone *tyrhenus*: as long as it is whole it ſwimmeth; but once broken, it ſinks preſently. Grief is a moth, which, getting into the mind, will, in a ſhort time, make the body, be it never ſo ſtrong and well-wrought a piece, like an old ſeary garment.

Philoſophers and phyſicians generally reckon ſorrow among the chief cauſes of ſhortening life. Chriſt was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief, and this ſome think was the reaſon that he appeared as a man of fifty, when he was little more than thirty years old, John viii. 57. But his ſorrows were of another kind†.



* Worldly ſorrow is after the manner of the world, ariſing from the love of it. *Eſtius on the place.*

† Theſe things write I unto you, who have wept ſo immoderately, that I am be-

Many a man's ſoul is to his body, as a ſharp knife to a thin ſheath, which eaſily cuts it through; and what do we by poring and pondering upon our troubles, but whet the knife that it may cut the deeper and quicker? Of all the creatures that ever God made (devils only excepted) man is the moſt able and apt to be his own tormentor.

How unmercifully do we load our bodies in times of afflictions? How do we not only waſte their ſtrength by ſorrow, but deny relief and neceſſary refreſhment? They muſt carry the load, but be allowed no refreſhment: If they can eat the bread of affliction, and drink tears, they may feed to the full; but no pleaſant bread, no quiet ſleep is permitted them. Surely you would not burden a beaſt as you do your own bodies: You would pity and relieve a brute beaſt, groaning and ſinking under an heavy burden, but you will not pity nor relieve your own bodies.

Some men's ſouls have given ſuch deep wounds to their bodies, that they are never like to enjoy many eaſy or comfortable days more whilſt they dwell in them.

Now, this is very ſinful and diſpleaſing to God; for if he have ſuch a tender care for our bodies, that he would not have us ſwallowed up of over much grief, no, though it be for ſin, 2 Cor. ii. 7. but even to that ſorrow ſets bounds; how much leſs with outward ſorrow for temporal loſs? May not your ſtock of natural ſtrength be employed to better purpoſes, think you, than theſe? Time may come, that you may earneſtly wiſh you had that health and ſtrength again to ſpend for God, which you now ſo laviſhly waſte, and prodigally caſt away upon your troubles, to no purpoſe or advantage.

It was therefore an high point of wiſdom in David, and recorded no doubt for our imitation, who, when the child was dead, ceaſed to mourn, aroſe, waſhed himſelf, and eat bread, 2 Sam. xii. 20.

*Fifthly*, When affliction ſours the ſpirit with diſcontent, and makes it inwardly grudge againſt the hand of God, then our trouble is full of ſin, and we ought to be humbled for it before the Lord.

Whatever God doth with us, or ours, ſtill we ſhould maintain good thoughts of him. A gracious heart cleaves nearer and nearer to God in affliction, and can juſtify God in his ſevere ſtrokes, acknowledging them to be all juſt and holy, Pſal. cxix. 75. "I know "alſo that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs "haſt afflicted me." And hereby the ſoul may comfortably evidence to itſelf its own uprightneſs and ſincere love to God; yea, it hath been of ſingular uſe to ſome ſouls, to take right meaſures of their love to God in ſuch trials: to have lovely and well-pleaſed thoughts of God, even when he ſmites us in our neareſt and dear-

come an example (which I always abhorred) of thoſe whom grief hath overcome. Yet this unreaſonable conduct I now condemn myſelf for. *Senec.*

eſt comforts, argues plainly that we love him for himſelf, and not for his gifts only. And thus his intereſt in the heart is deeper than any creature-intereſt is. And ſuch is the comfort that hath reſulted to ſome from ſuch diſcoveries of their own hearts by cloſe ſmarting afflictions, that they would not part with it, to have their comforts (whoſe removal occaſioned them) given back in lieu of it.

But to ſwell with ſecret diſcontent, and have hard thoughts of God, as if he had done us wrong, or dealt more ſeverely with us than any; O this is a vile temper, curſed fruit ſpringing from an evil root; a very carnal, ignorant, proud heart; or at leaſt from a very diſtempered, if renewed, heart. So it was with Jonah when God ſmote his gourd: "Yea, (ſaith he) I do well to be angry even unto death," Jonah iv. 9. Poor man! he was highly diſtempered at this time, and out of frame; this was not his true temper, or ordinary frame, but a ſurprize; the effect of a paroxiſm of temptation, in which his paſſions had been over-heated.

Few dare to vent it in ſuch language: But how many have their hearts imbittered by diſcontent, and ſecret riſings againſt the Lord? Which, if ever the Lord open their eyes to ſee, will coſt them more trouble than ever that affliction did, which gave the occaſion of it.

I deny not but the beſt heart may be tempted to think and ſpeak frowardly concerning theſe works of the Lord; that envious adverſary, the devil, will blow the coals, and labour to blow up our ſpirits at ſuch times into high diſcontents: The temptation was ſtrong even upon David himſelf, to take up hard thoughts of God, and to conclude, "Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain;" q. d. How little privilege from the worſt of evils hath a man by his godlineſs? But he ſoon ſuppreſſed ſuch motions: "If I ſhould ſay thus, I ſhould "offend againſt the generation of thy children:" Meaning, that he ſhould condemn the whole race of godly men through the whole world; for who is there among the mall, but is, or hath been, or may be, afflicted as ſeverely as myſelf?

"Surely, it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have borne chaſtiſe-"ment, I will not offend any more," Job xxxiv. 31. Whatever God doth with you, ſpeak well, and think well of him, and his works.

Sixthly, *Our ſorrows exceed due bounds when we continually excite and provoke them by willing irritations.*

Grief, like a lion, loves to play with us before it deſtroy us. And ſtrange it is that we ſhould find ſome kind of pleaſure in rouzing our ſorrows. It is * Seneca's obſervation, and experimentally true, that even ſorrow itſelf hath a certain kind of delight attending it.

The Jews, that were with Mary in the houſe to comfort her,

* Sorrow itſelf has a certain kind of pleaſure attending it; when the parents call to mind the pleaſant ſayings, the cheerful converſation, and the filial affection of their children, then their eyes are refreſhed as it were with a kind of joy.

" When they ſaw that ſhe went out haſtily, followed her, ſaying, ſhe " goeth to the grave to weep there," John xi. 32. as they do, ſaith* Calvin, 'that ſeek to provoke their troubles, by going to the grave, 'or often looking upon the dead body.'

Thus we delight to look upon the relics of our deceaſed friends, and often to mention their actions, and ſayings, not ſo much for any matter of holy, and weighty inſtruction, or imitation, for that would warrant, and commend the action; but rather to rub the wound, and fetch freſh blood from it, by piercing ourſelves with ſome little trivial, yet wounding circumſtances. I have known many that will ſit and talk of the features, actions and ſayings, of their children, for hours together, and weep at the rehearſal of them, and that for many months after they are gone; ſo keeping the wound continually open, and excruciating their own hearts, without any benefit at all by them: A lock of hair, or ſome ſuch trifles, muſt be kept for this purpoſe, to renew their ſorrow daily, by looking on it. On this account, Jacob would not have his ſon called Benoni, leſt it ſhould renew his ſorrow, but Benjamin.

I am far from commending a brutiſh oblivion of our dear relations, and condemn it as much as I do this childiſh and unprofitable remembrance. O friends! we have other things to do under the rod, than theſe: Were it not better to be ſearching our hearts, and houſes, when God's rod is upon us, and ſtudying how to anſwer the end of it, by mortifying thoſe corruptions which provoke it? Surely the rod works not kindly till it comes to this.

*Seventhly, Laſtly,* Our ſorrows may then be pronounced ſinful, when they deafen our ears to all the wholeſome, and ſeaſonable words of counſel, and comfort, offered us for our relief, and ſupport.

Jer. xxxi. 15. 'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and " bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, would not be " comforted for her children, becauſe they were not." She will admit no comfort, her diſeaſe is curable by no other means but the reſtoration of her children; give her them again, and ſhe will be quiet; elſe you ſpeak into air, ſhe regards not whatever you ſay.

Thus Iſrael, in the cruel bondage in Egypt, Moſes brings them the glad tidings of deliverance; " But they hearkened not to him, " becauſe of the anguiſh of ſpirit, and their cruel bondage," Exod. vi. 9.

Thus obſtinately fixed are many, in their trouble, that no words of advice, or comfort, find any place with them; yea, I have known ſome exceeding quick and ingenious, even above the rate of their common parts and abilities, in inventing ſhifts, and framing objections to turn off comfort from themſelves, as if they had been hired to plead againſt their own intereſt; and if they be driven from thoſe pleas, yet they are ſettled in their troubles, too faſt to be moved;

* *Ex eorum more qui luctus ſui irritamenta quærunt.* Calvin.

ſay what you will, they mind it not, or, at moſt, it abides not upon them. Let proper, ſeaſonable advice, or comfort be tendered, they refuſe it; your counſel is good, but they have no heart to it now. Thus, Pſal. lxxvii. 10. "My ſoul (ſaith he) refuſed to be "comforted."

To want comfort in time of affliction, is an aggravation of our affliction; but to refuſe it when offered us, wants not ſin. Time may come when we would be glad to receive comfort, or hear a word of ſupport, and ſhall be denied it.

O it is a mercy to the afflicted to have Barnabas with them, an interpreter, one among a thouſand; and it will be the great ſin, and folly of the afflicted, to ſpill, like water upon the ground, thoſe excellent cordials, prepared and offered to them, out of a froward, or dead ſpirit, under trouble. Say not with them, Lam. iii. 18, 19. "My hope is periſhed from the Lord, remembering mine affliction "and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall." It is a thouſand pities the wormwood and gall of affliction ſhould ſo diſguſt a Chriſtian, as that he ſhould not at any time be able to reliſh the ſweetneſs that is in Chriſt, and in the promiſes. And thus I have diſpatched the firſt part of my deſign, in ſhewing you wherein the ſin of mourners doth not lie, and in what it doth.

*Secondly*, Having cleared this, and ſhewn you wherein the ſin and danger lies; my way is now prepared to the ſecond thing propoſed, namely, to diſſuade mourners from theſe ſinful exceſſes of ſorrows, and keep the golden bridle of moderation upon their paſſions in times of affliction. And O that my words may be as ſucceſsful upon thoſe penſive ſouls that ſhall read them, as Abigail's were to David, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. who, when he perceived how proper and ſeaſonable they were, ſaid, "Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who ſent thee "this day to meet me, and bleſſed be thy advice."

I am ſenſible how hard a taſk it is I here undertake, to charm down and allay mutinous, raging, and tumultuous paſſions; to give a check to the torrent of paſſion, is ordinarily but to provoke it, and make it rage and ſwell the more.

The work is the Lord's, it wholly depends upon his power and bleſſing. He that ſaith to the ſea when the waves thereof roar, be ſtill, can alſo quiet and compoſe the ſtormy and tumultuous ſea, that rages in the breaſts of the afflicted, and caſts up nothing but the froth of vain and uſeleſs complaints of our miſery, or the dirt of ſinful and wicked complaints of the dealings of the Lord with us.

The rod of affliction goes round, and viſits all ſorts of perſons, without difference: it is upon the tabernacles of the juſt and the unjuſt, the righteous and the wicked; both are mourning under the rod.

The godly are not ſo to be minded, as that the other be wholly neglected; they have as ſtrong and tender, though not as regular affections to their relations, and muſt not be wholly ſuffered to ſink under their unrelieved burdens.

Here, therefore, I muſt have reſpect to two ſorts of perſons, whom I find in tears upon the ſame account; I mean, the loſs of their dear relations, the regenerate, and the unregenerate. I am a debtor to both, and ſhall endeavour their ſupport and aſſiſtance, for even the unregenerate call for our help and pity, and muſt not be neglected and wholly ſlighted in their afflictions. We muſt pity them that cannot pity themſelves*. The law of God commands us to help a beaſt, if fallen under its burden; how much more a man ſinking under a load of ſorrows?

I confeſs, uſes of comfort to the unregenerate are not (ordinarily) in uſe among us, and it may ſeem ſtrange whence any thing of ſupport ſhould be drawn for them that have no ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt or the promiſes.

I confeſs alſo I find myſelf under great diſadvantages for this work; I cannot offer them thoſe reviving cordials that are contained in Chriſt and the covenant, for God's afflicted people; but yet, ſuch is the goodneſs of God even to his enemies, that they are not left wholly without ſupports or means to allay their ſorrow.

If this, therefore, be thy caſe, who readeſt theſe lines; afflicted and unſanctified, mourning bitterly for thy dead friends, and more cauſe to mourn for thy dead ſoul, chriſtleſs and graceleſs, as well as childleſs or friendleſs: no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope; full of trouble, and no vent by prayer or faith to eaſe thy heart.

Poor creature! thy caſe is ſad, but yet do not wholly ſink and ſuffer thyſelf to be ſwallowed up of grief: thou haſt laid thy dear one in the grave, yet throw not thyſelf headlong into the grave after him; that will not be the way to remedy thy miſery: but ſit down a while, and ponder theſe three things.

Firſt, *That of all perſons in the world, thou haſt moſt reaſon to be tender over thy life and health, and careful to preſerve it: for if thy troubles deſtroy thee, thou art eternally loſt, undone for ever.* "Worldly ſorrow (ſaith the apoſtle) works death." And if it works thy death, it works thy damnation alſo; for hell follows that pale horſe, Rev. vi. 8. If a believer die, there is no danger of hell to him, the ſecond death hath no power over him; but woe to thee if it overtake thee in thy ſin: beware, therefore what thou doſt againſt thy health and life; do not put the candle of ſorrow too near that thread by which thou hangeſt over the mouth of hell.

O it is far better to be childleſs or friendleſs on earth, than hopeleſs and remedileſs in hell.

*Secondly*, Own and admire the bounty and goodneſs of God manifeſted to thee in this affliction; that when death came into thy family to ſmite and carry off one, it had not fallen to thy lot to be the perſon; thy huſband, wife or child is taken, and thou art left: had

* *Nihil miſerius miſero non miſerante ſeipſum*, i. e. None is more to be pitied than a poor ſinner that does not pity himſelf.

thy name been in the commiſſion, thou hadſt been now paſt hope.

O the ſparing mercy of God! the wonderful long-ſuffering of God towards thee! Poſſibly that poor creature that is gone never provoked God as thou haſt done: thy poor child never abuſed mercies, neglected calls, treaſured up the ten thouſandth part of that guilt that thou haſt done: ſo that thou mighteſt well imagine it ſhould rather have cut thee down, that hadſt ſo provoked God, than thy poor little one.

But, O the admirable patience of God! O the riches of his long-ſuffering! Thou art only warned, not ſmitten by it: is there nothing in this worth thankful acknowledgment? Is it not better to be in black for another on earth, than in the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever? Is it not eaſier to go to the grave with thy dead friend, and weep there, than to go to hell among the damned, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth?

*Thirdly*, This affliction for which thou mourneſt, may be the greateſt mercy to thee that ever yet befel thee in this world. God hath now made thy heart ſoft by trouble, ſhewed thee the vanity of this world, and what a poor trifle it is which thou madeſt thy happineſs: there is now a dark cloud ſpread over all thy worldly comforts. Now, O now! if the Lord would but ſtrike in with this affliction, and by it open thine eyes to ſee thy deplorable ſtate, and take off thy heart for ever from the vain world, which thou now ſeeſt hath nothing in it; and cauſe thee to chuſe Chriſt, the only abiding good for thy portion. If now thy affliction may but bring thy ſin to remembrance, and thy dead friend may but bring thee to a ſenſe of thy dead ſoul, which is as cold to God and ſpiritual things, as his body is to thee; and more loathſome in his eyes than that corpſe is, or ſhortly will be to the eyes of men: then this day is certainly a day of the greateſt mercy that ever yet thou ſaweſt. O happy death, that ſhall prove life to thy ſoul.

Why this is ſometimes the way of the Lord with men, Job xxxvi. 8, 9. "If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, "then he ſheweth them their work, and their tranſgreſſion, that "they have exceeded: he openeth alſo their ear to diſcipline, and "commandeth them that they ſhall return from iniquity."

O conſider, poor penſive creature, that which ſtole away thy heart from God is now gone; that which eat up thy time and thoughts, that there was no room for God, ſoul, or eternity in them, is gone: all the vain expectations that thou raiſedſt up unto thyſelf, from that poor creature which now lies in the duſt, are in one day quite periſhed. O what an advantage haſt thou now for heaven, beyond whatever thou yet hadſt! if God will but bleſs this rod, thou wilt have cauſe to keep many a thankſgiving day for this day.

I pray, let theſe three things be pondered by you. I can beſtow no more comforts upon you, your condition bars the beſt comforts

from you, they belong to the people of God, and you have yet nothing to do with them.

I ſhall therefore turn from you to them, and preſent ſome choicer comforts to them, to whom they properly belong, which may be of great uſe to you in reading, if it be but to convince you of the bleſſed privilege and ſtate of the people of God in the greateſt plunges of troubles in this world, and what advantages their intereſt in Chriſt gives them for peace and ſettlement, beyond that ſtate you are in.

And here I do with much more freedom and hope of ſucceſs, apply myſelf to the work of counſelling and comforting the afflicted. You are the fearers of the Lord, and tremble at his word: the leaſt ſin is more formidable to you than the greateſt affliction: doubtleſs you would rather chuſe to bury all your children, than provoke and grieve your heavenly Father. Your relations are dear, but Chriſt is dearer to you by far.

Well then, let me perſuade you to retire a while into your cloſets, redeem a little time from your unprofitable ſorrows, eaſe and empty your hearts before the Lord, and beg his bleſſing upon the relieving, quieting, and heart-compoſing conſiderations that follow; ſome of which are more general and common, ſome more particular and ſpecial; but all of them ſuch as, through the bleſſing of God, may be very uſeful at this time to your ſouls.

Conſideration 1. *Conſider, in this day of ſorrow, who is the framer and author of this rod by which you now ſmart; is it not the Lord? And if the Lord hath done it, it becomes you meekly to ſubmit.* Pſal. xlvi. 10. "Be ſtill, and know that I am God."

Man and man ſtand upon even ground; if your fellow-creature does any thing that diſpleaſes you, you may not only enquire who did it, but why he did it? You may demand his grounds and reaſons for what he hath done; but you may not do ſo here: It is expected that this one thing, *The Lord hath done it*, ſhould, without any farther diſputes or conteſts, ſilence and quiet you, whatever it be that he hath done. Job xxxiii. 13. "Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt "him? For he giveth not an account of any of his matters." The Supreme Being muſt needs be an unaccountable and uncontroulable Being.

It is a ſhame for a child to ſtrive with his father; a ſhame for a ſervant to contend with his maſter; but for a creature to quarrel and ſtrive with the God that made him, O how ſhameful is it! Surely it is highly reaſonable that you be ſubject to that will whence you proceeded, and that he who formed you and yours ſhould diſpoſe of both as ſeemeth him good. It is ſaid, 2 Sam. iii. 36. "That what-"ſoever the king did pleaſed all the people:" And ſhall any thing the Lord doth diſpleaſe you? He can do no wrong. If we pluck a roſe in the bud as we walk in our gardens, who ſhall blame us for it? It is our own, and we may crop it off when we pleaſe: Is not this the caſe? Thy ſweet bud, which was cropt off before it was fully blown,

was cropt off by him that owned it, yea, by him that formed it. If his dominion be abſolute, ſure his diſpoſal ſhould be acceptable.

It was ſo to good Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do "what ſeemeth him good:" And it was ſo to David, Pſal. xxxix. 9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; becauſe thou didſt it." O let it be for ever remembered, "That he whoſe name alone is Jeho-"vah, is the Moſt High over all the earth," Pſalm lxxxiii. 18.

The glorious ſovereignty of God, is illuſtriouſly diſplayed in two things, his decrees and his providences: With reſpect to the firſt he ſaith, Rom. ix. 15. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mer-"cy." Here is no ground of diſputing with him; for ſo it is ſaid, ver. 20. "Who art thou, O man, that replieſt againſt God? Shall "the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, why haſt thou made "me thus?" Hath not the potter power over the clay?

And as to his providences, wherein his ſovereignty is alſo manifeſted; it is ſaid, Zech. ii. 14. "Be ſilent, O all fleſh, before the Lord, "for he is raiſed up out of his habitation." It is ſpoken of his providential working in the changes of kingdoms and deſolations that attend them.

Now, ſeeing the caſe ſtands thus, that the Lord hath done it; it is his pleaſure to have it ſo, and that if it had not been his will, it could never have been as it is; he that gave thee (rather lent thee) thy relation hath alſo taken him: O how quiet ſhould this conſideration leave thee? If your landlord, who has many years ſuffered you to dwell in his houſe, does at laſt warn you out of it, though he tells you not why; you will not contend with him, or ſay he has done you wrong: Much leſs if he tells you it will be more for his profit and accommodation to take it into his own hand, than let it to you any longer.

Doubtleſs, reaſon will tell you, you ought quietly to pack up and quit it. It is your great landlord, from whom you hold (at pleaſure) your own, and your relations lives, that hath now warned you out from one of them, it being more for his glory, it may be, to take it in his own hands, by death; and muſt you diſpute the caſe with him?

Come, Chriſtian, this no way becomes thee, but rather, "The "Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name "of the Lord." Look off from a dead creature, lift up thine eyes to the ſovereign, wiſe, and holy pleaſure that ordered this affliction: Conſider who he is, and what thou art; yea, purſue this conſideration till thou canſt ſay, I am now filled with the will of God.

Conſideration 2. *Ponder well the quality of the comfort you are deprived of, and remember, that when you had it, it ſtood but in the rank and order of common and inferior comforts.*

Children, and all other relations are but common bleſſings, which God indifferently beſtows upon his friends and enemies: and by the having or loſing of them, no man knows either love or hatred. It is

ſaid of the wicked, Pſal. lxxvii. 14. that they are full of children; yea, and of children that do ſurvive them too; for *they leave their ſubſtance to their babes.* Full of ſin, yet full of children, and theſe children live to inherit their parents ſins and eſtates together.

It is the miſtaking of the quality and nature of our enjoyments, that ſo plunges us into trouble when we loſe them. We think there is ſo neceſſary a connection betwixt theſe creatures and our happineſs that we are utterly undone when they fail us.

But this is our miſtake; there is no ſuch neceſſary connection or dependence; we may be happy without theſe things: It is not father, mother, wife, or child, in which our chief good and felicity lies; we have higher, better, and more enduring things than theſe; all theſe may periſh, and yet our ſoul be ſecure and ſafe; yea, and our comfort in the way, as well as end, may be ſafe enough, though theſe are gone: God hath better things to comfort his people with than theſe, and worſe rods to afflict you with than the removal of theſe. Had God let your children live and flouriſh; and given you eaſe and reſt in your tabernacle, but in the mean time inflicted ſpiritual judgments upon your ſouls; how much more ſad had your caſe been?

But as long as our beſt mercies are all ſafe, the things that have ſalvation in them remain, and only the things that have vanity in them are removed; you are not prejudiced, or much hindered as to the attainment of your laſt end, by the loſs of theſe things.

Alas! it was not Chriſt's intent to purchaſe for you a ſenſual content in the enjoyment of theſe earthly comforts; but to redeem you from all iniquity, purge your corruptions, ſanctify your natures, wean your hearts from this vain world, and ſo to diſpoſe and order your preſent condition, that, finding no reſt and content here, you might the more ardently pant and ſigh after the reſt which remains for the people of God. And are you not in as probable a way to attain this end now, as you were before? Do you think you are not as likely, by theſe methods of providence, to be weaned from the world, as by more pleaſant and proſperous ones? Every wiſe man reckons that ſtation and condition to be beſt for him, which moſt promotes and ſecures his laſt end and great deſign.

Well then, reckon you are as well without theſe things as with them; yea, and better too, if they were but clogs and ſnares upon your affections; you have really loſt nothing if the things wherein your eternal happineſs conſiſteth be yet ſafe. Many of God's deareſt children have been denied ſuch comforts as theſe, and many have been deprived of them, and yet never the farther from Chriſt and heaven for that.

Conſideration 3. *Always remember, that how ſoon and unexpected ſoever your parting with your relations was, yet your leaſe was expired before you loſt them, and you enjoyed them every moment of the time that God intended them for you.*

Before this relation, whoſe loſs you lament, was born, the time of your enjoyment and ſeparation was unalterably fixed and limited in heaven by the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh: And although it was a ſecret to you whilſt your friend was with you; yet now it is a plain and evident thing that this was the time of ſeparation before appointed; and that the life of your friend could by no means be protracted or abbreviated, but muſt keep your company juſt ſo far, and then part with you.

This poſition wants no full and clear ſcripture authority for its foundation: How pregnant and full is that text, Job xxiv. 5, 6. "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with "thee: thou haſt appointed him his bounds, which he cannot paſs." The time of our life, as well as the place of your habitation was prefixed before we were born.

It will greatly conduce to your ſettlement and peace to be well eſtabliſhed in this truth; that the appointed time was fully come when you and your dear relation parted; for it will prevent and ſave a great deal of trouble which comes from our after-reflections.

O if this had been done, or that omitted; had it not been for ſuch miſcarriages and over-ſights, my dear huſband, wife, or child, had been alive at this day! No, the Lord's time was fully come, and all things concurred, and fell in together to bring about the pleaſure of his will; let that ſatisfy you: Had the ableſt phyſicians in the world been there, or had they that were there preſcribed another courſe, as it is now, ſo it would have been when they had done all. Only it muſt be precautioned, that the decree of God no way excuſes any voluntary, or ſinful neglects or miſcarriages. God over-rules theſe things to ſerve his own ends, but no way approves them; but it greatly relieves, againſt all our involuntary and unavoidable over-ſights and miſtakes about the uſe of means, or the timing of them; for it could not be otherwiſe than now it is.

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or the vigour and ſoundneſs of his natural conſtitution; for his wickedneſs either drowns nature in an exceſs of riot and luxury, or expoſes him to the hand of juſtice, which cuts him off for his wickedneſs before he hath accompliſhed half his days.

Again, we muſt diſtinguiſh of the term or limit for death, which is either General, or Special.

The general limits are now ſeventy or eighty years, Pſal. xc. 19. "The days of our years are threeſcore years and ten, and if by reaſon "of ſtrength they are fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength labour and "ſorrow." To this ſhort limit the life of man is generally reduced ſince the flood; and though there are ſome few exceptions, yet the general rule is not thereby deſtroyed.

The ſpecial limit is that proportion of time, which God, by his own counſel and will, hath allotted to every individual perſon; and it is only known to us by the event: This we affirm to be a fixed, and immoveable term; with it all things ſhall fall in, and obſerve the will of God in our diſſolution at that time. But becauſe the general limit is known, and this ſpecial limit is a ſecret hid in God's own breaſt; therefore man reckons by the former account, and may be ſaid, when he dies at thirty, or forty years old, to be cut off in the midſt of his days: For it is ſo, reckoning by the general account, though he be not cut off till the end of his days, reckoning by the ſpecial limit.

Thus he that is wicked, dies before his time; (i. e.) the time he might attain to in an ordinary way; but not before the time God hath appointed: And ſo in all other objected ſcriptures.

It is not proper at all, in a ſubject of this nature, to digreſs into a controverſy: Alas! the poor mourner, overwhelmed with grief, hath no pleaſure in that; it is not proper for him at this time, and therefore I ſhall, for the preſent, wave the controverſy, and wind up this conſideration with an humble, and ſerious motion to the afflicted, that they will wiſely conſider the matter. The Lord's time was come, your relations lived with you every moment that God intended them for you before you had them.

O parents! mind this, I beſeech you; the time of your child's continuance in the womb was fixed to a minute by the Lord; and when the parturient fulneſs of that time was come, were you not willing it ſhould be delivered thence into the world? The tender mother would not have it abide one minute longer in the womb, how well ſoever ſhe loved it; and is there not the ſame reaſon we ſhould be willing, when God's appointed time is come to have it delivered by death out of this ſtate, which, in reſpect of the life of heaven, is but as the life of a child in the womb, to its life in the open world.

And let none ſay the death of children is a premature death. God hath ways to ripen them for heaven, whom he intends to gather thither betimes, the which we know not: in reſpect of fitneſs, they die in a full age, though they be cut off in the bud of their time.

He that appointed the ſeaſons of the year, appointed the ſeaſons of our comfort in our relations: And as thoſe ſeaſons cannot be altered, no more can theſe. All the courſe of providence is guided by an unalterable decree; what falls out caſually to our apprehenſion, yet falls out neceſſarily in reſpect of God's appointment.

O therefore be quieted in it, this muſt needs be as it is.

Conſider. 4. *Hath God ſmitten your darling, and taken away the delight of your eyes with this ſtroke? Bear this ſtroke with patience and quiet ſubmiſſion: For how know you but your trouble might have been greater from the life, than it now is from the death of your children?*

Sad experience made a holy man once ſay, It is better to weep for ten dead children, than for one living child: A living child may prove a continual dropping, yea, a continual dying to the parent's heart. What a ſad word was that of David to Abiſhai, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Behold, (ſaith he) my ſon, which came out of my bowels, "ſeeketh my life." I remember Seneca, in his conſolatory epiſtle to his friend Marullus, brings in his friend thus aggravating the death of his child.

'O, (ſaith Marullus) had my child lived with me, to how great 'modeſty, gravity, and prudence, might my diſcipline have formed 'and moulded him? But, ſaith * Seneca, (which is more to be fear-'ed) he might have been as others moſtly are; for look, (ſaith he) 'what children come even out of the worthieſt families; ſuch who 'exerciſe both their own, and others luſts; in all whoſe life there is 'not a day without the mark of ſome notorious wickedneſs upon it.'

I know your tender love to your children will ſcarce admit ſuch jealouſies of them; they are, for the preſent, ſweet, lovely, innocent companions, and you doubt not but by your care of their education, and prayer for them, they might have been the joy of your hearts.

Why doubtleſs Eſau, when he was little, and in his tender age, promiſed as much comfort to his parents as Jacob did; and I queſtion not but Iſaac and Rebecca (a glorious pair) ſpent as many prayers, and beſtowed as many holy counſels upon him, as they did upon his brother: But when the child grew up to riper years, then he became a ſharp affliction to his parents; for it is ſaid, Gen. xxvi. 34. "That when Eſau was forty years old, he took to wife Judith the "daughter of Berith the Hittite, which was a grief of mind to Iſaac "and Rebecca." The word in the original comes from a root that ſignifies to imbitter:† This child imbittered the minds of his parents by his rebellion againſt them, and deſpiſing their counſels.

And I cannot doubt but Abraham diſciplined his family as ſtrictly as any of you; never man received a higher encomium from God upon that account. Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will "command his children and his houſehold after him, and they ſhall "keep the way of the Lord." Nor can I think but he beſtowed as

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* Seneca's Epiſtles. p. 84. † *Erat amaritudo animi.*

many and as frequent prayers for his children, and particularly for his ſon Iſhmael, as any of you: We find one, and that a very pathetical one, recorded, Gen. xvii. 18. "O that Iſhmael might live be-"fore thee:" And yet you know how he proved, a ſon that yieldeth him no more comfort than Eſau did to Jacob and Rebecca.

O how much more common is it for parents to ſee the vices and evils of their children, than their virtues and graces? And where one parent lives to rejoice in beholding the grace of God ſhining forth in the life of his child, there are twenty, it may be an hundred that live to behold, to their vexation and grief, the workings of corruption in them.

It is a note of * Plutarch, in his morals, Nicoles (ſaith he) lived not to ſee the noble victory obtained by Themiſtocles his ſon; nor Miltiades, to ſee the battle his ſon Cimon won in the field; nor Zantippus, to hear his ſon Pericles preach, and make orations. Ariſton never heard his ſon Plato's lectures and diſputations; but men (ſaith he) commonly live to ſee their children fall a gaming, revelling, drinking, and whoring: Multitudes live to ſee ſuch things to their ſorrow. And if thou be a gracious ſoul, O what a cut would this be to thy very heart! to ſee thoſe (as David ſpake of his Abſalom) that came out of thy bowels, to be ſinning againſt God, that God whom thou loveſt, and whoſe honour is dearer to thee than thy very life!

But admit they ſhould prove civil and hopeful children, yet mighteſt thou not live to ſee more miſery come upon them than thou couldſt endure to ſee? O think what a ſad and doleful ſight was that to Zedekiah, Jer. l. 10. "The king of Babylon brought his children, and "ſlew them before his eyes." Horrid ſpectacle! and that leads to

Conſider. 5. *How know you, but by this ſtroke which you ſo lament, God hath taken them away from the evil to come?*

Is it God's uſual way, when ſome extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to hide ſome of his weak and tender ones out of the way by death, Iſa. lvii. 1, 2. he leaves ſome, and removes others, but taketh care for the ſecurity of all. He provided a grave for Methuſelah before the flood. The grave is an hiding-place to ſome, and God ſees it better for them to be under-ground than above ground in ſuch evil days.

Juſt as a careful and tender father, who hath a ſon abroad at ſchool, hearing the plague is broke out in or near the place, ſends his horſe preſently to fetch home his ſon before the danger and difficulty be greater. Death is our Father's pale horſe which he ſends to fetch home his tender children, and carry them out of harm's way.

Surely when national calamities are drawing on, it is far better for our friends to be in the grave in peace, than expoſed to the miſeries and diſtreſſes that are here, which is the meaning of Jer. xxii.

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* Plutarch's Morals, p. 222.

10. "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep for "him that goeth away, for he ſhall return no more, nor ſee his na- "tive country."

And is there not a dreadful ſound of troubles now in our ears? Do not the clouds gather blackneſs? Surely all things round about us ſeem to be preparing and diſpoſing themſelves for affliction. The days may be nigh in which you ſhall ſay, "Bleſſed is the womb that "never bare, and the paps that never gave ſuck."

It was in the day wherein the faith and patience of the ſaints were exerciſed, that John heard a voice from heaven, ſaying to him, "Write, bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence- "forth."

Thy friend by an act of favour is diſbanded by death, whilſt thou thyſelf art left to endure a great fight of affliction. And now if troubles come, thy cares and fears will be ſo much the leſs, and thy own death ſo much the eaſier to thee; when ſo much of thee is in heaven already. In this caſe the Lord, by a merciful diſpenſation, is providing both for their ſafety, and thy own eaſier paſſage to them.

In removing thy friends before-hand, he ſeems to ſay to thee, as he did to Peter, 1 John xiii. 7. "What I do thou knoweſt not now, "but thou ſhalt know hereafter." The eye of providence hath a proſpect far beyond thine; probably it would be a harder taſk for thee to leave them behind, than to follow them.

A tree that is deeply rooted in the earth, requires many ſtrokes to fell it; but when its roots are looſed before-hand, then an eaſy ſtroke lays it down upon the earth.

Conſider. 6. *A parting time muſt needs come, and why is not this as good as another?* You knew before-hand your child or friend was mortal, and that the thread that linked you together muſt be cut. If any one, ſaith Baſil, had aſked you when your child was born, What is that which is born? What would you have anſwered? Would you not have ſaid, It is a man? And if a man, then a mortal, vaniſhing thing. And why then are you ſurprized with wonder to ſee a dying thing dead?

He, ſaith * Seneca, who complains that one is dead, complains that he was a man. All men are under the ſame condition, to whoſe ſhare it falls to be born, to him it remains to die.

We are indeed diſtinguiſhed by the intervals, but equalized in the iſſue: "It is appointed to all men once to die," Heb. ix. 27. There is a ſtatute law of heaven in the caſe.

Poſſibly you think this is the worſt time for parting that could be; had you enjoyed it longer, you could have parted eaſier; but how are you deceived in that? The longer you had enjoyed it, the more loth ſtill you would have been to leave it; the deeper it would have rooted itſelf in your affection.

* Bear the law of neceſſity with an even mind. How many beſides you muſt ſorrow? *Seneca, Epiſtle* 99.

Had God given you ſuch a privilege as was once granted to the Engliſh parliament; that the union betwixt you and your friend ſhould not be diſſolved till you yourſelf were willing it ſhould be diſſolved; when, think you, would you have been willing it ſhould be diſſolved?

It is well for us and ours that our times are in God's hand, and not in our own. And how immature ſoever it ſeemed to be when it was cut down; yet it "came to the grave in a full age, as a ſhock of "corn in its ſeaſon," Job v. 26. They that are in Chriſt, and in the covenant, never die unſeaſonably, whenſoever they die (ſaith † one upon the text), 'They die in a good old age; yea, though they 'die in the ſpring and flower of youth; they die in a good old age; 'i. e. they are ripe for death whenever they die. Whenever the 'godly die, it is harveſt time with him; though in a natural capacity 'he be cut down while he is green, and cropt in the bud or bloſſom; 'yet in his ſpiritual capacity he never dies before he is ripe; God can 'ripen his ſpeedily, he can let out ſuch warm rays and beams of his 'Holy Spirit upon them, as ſhall ſoon maturate the ſeeds of grace 'into a preparedneſs for glory.'

It was doubtleſs the moſt fit and ſeaſonable time for them that ever they could die in, and as it is a fit time for them, ſo for you alſo. Had it lived longer, it might either have engaged you more, and ſo your parting would have been harder; or elſe have puzzled and ſtumbled you more by diſcovering its natural corruption: and then what a ſtinging aggravation of your ſorrow would that have been?

Surely the Lord of time is the beſt judge of time; and in nothing do we more diſcover our folly and raſhneſs, than in preſuming to fix the times either of our comforts or troubles; as for our comforts, we never think they can come too ſoon; we would have them preſently, whether the ſeaſon be fit or not, as Numb. xii. 13. "Heal her now, "Lord." O let it be done ſpeedily; we are in poſt-haſte for our comforts, and for our afflictions we never think they come late enough; not at this time, Lord, rather at any other time than now.

But it is good to leave the timing both of the one and the other to him, whoſe works are all beautiful in their ſeaſons, and never doth any thing in an improper time.

Conſider. 7. *Call to mind in this day of trouble, the covenant you have with God, and what you ſolemnly promiſed him in the day you took him for your God.*

It will be very ſeaſonable and uſeful for thee, Chriſtian, at this time to reflect upon theſe tranſactions, and the frame of thy heart in thoſe days, when an heavier load of ſorrow preſt thy heart, than thou now feeleſt.

In thoſe your ſpiritual diſtreſſes, when the burden of ſin lay heavy, the curſe of the law, the fear of hell, the dread of death and eternity beſet thee on every ſide, and ſhut thee up to Chriſt, the on-

† Caryl, on the place.

ly door of hope; ah! what good news wouldſt thou then have accounted it, to eſcape that danger with the loſs of all earthly comforts!

Was not this thy cry in thoſe days? 'Lord, give me Chriſt, and 'deny me whatever elſe thou pleaſeſt. Pardon my ſin, ſave my ſoul, 'and, in order to both, unite me with Chriſt, and I will never repine 'or open my mouth. Do what thou wilt with me; let me be 'friendleſs, let me be childleſs, let me be poor, let me be any thing 'rather than a chriſtleſs, graceleſs, hopeleſs ſoul.'

And when the Lord hearkened to thy cry, and ſhewed thee mercy; when he drew thee off from the world into thy cloſet, and there treated with thee in ſecret, when he was working up thy heart to the terms of his covenant, and made thee willing to accept Chriſt upon his own terms; O then, how heartily didſt thou ſubmit to his yoke, as moſt reaſonable and eaſy, as at that time it ſeemed to thee?

Call to mind theſe days, the ſecret places where Chriſt and you made the bargain; have not theſe words, or words to this ſenſe, been whiſpered by thee into his ear with a dropping eye, and melting heart?

'Lord Jeſus, here am I, a poor guilty ſinner, deeply laden with 'ſin; fear and trouble upon one hand, and there is a juſt God, a 'ſevere law, and everlaſting burnings, on the other hand: but 'bleſſed be God, O bleſſed be God for Jeſus the Mediator, who in-'terpoſeth betwixt me and it. Thou art the only door of hope at 'which I can eſcape, thy blood the only means of my pardon and 'ſalvation. Thou haſt ſaid, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and 'are heavy laden." Thou haſt promiſed, that he that cometh to 'thee, ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out.

'Bleſſed Jeſus, thy poor creature cometh to thee upon theſe en-'couragements: I come, O but it is with many ſtaggerings, with 'many doubts and fears of the iſſue; yet I am willing to come and 'make a covenant with thee this day.

'I take thee this day to be my Lord, and ſubmit heartily to all thy 'diſpoſals; do what thou wilt with me, or mine, let me be rich or 'poor, any thing or nothing in this world: I am willing to be as 'thou wouldſt have me, and I do likewiſe give myſelf to thee this 'day, to be thine; all I am, all I have ſhall be thine, thine to ſerve 'thee, and thine to be diſpoſed of at thy pleaſure. Thou ſhalt 'henceforth be my higheſt Lord, my chiefeſt good, my laſt end.'

Now, Chriſtian, make good to Chriſt what thou ſo ſolemnly promiſed him: He, I ſay, he hath diſpoſed of this thy dear relation, as pleaſed him, and is thereby trying thy uprightneſs in the covenant which thou madeſt with him: Now where is the ſatisfaction and content thou promiſedeſt to take in all his diſpoſals? Where is that covenanted ſubmiſſion to his will? Didſt thou except this affliction that is come upon thee?

Didſt thou tell him, Lord, I will be content thou ſhalt, when thou pleaſeſt, take any thing I have, ſave only this huſband, this wife, or

this dear child; I reſerve this out of the bargain? I ſhall never endure that thou ſhouldſt kill this comfort. If ſo, thou didſt in all this but prove thyſelf an hypocrite; if thou waſt ſincere in thy covenant, as Chriſt had no reſerve on his part, ſo thou hadſt none on thine.

It was all without any exception thou then reſignedſt to him, and now wilt thou go back from thy word, as one that had out-promiſed himſelf, and repents the bargain? Or, at leaſt, as one that hath forgotten theſe ſolemn tranſactions in the days of thy diſtreſs? Wherein hath Chriſt failed in one tittle that he promiſed thee? Charge him, if thou canſt, with the leaſt unfaithfulneſs; he hath been faithful to a tittle on his part, O be thou ſo upon thine; this day it is put to the proof, remember what thou haſt promiſed him.

Conſider. 8. *But if thy covenant with God will not quiet thee, yet methinks God's covenant with thee might be preſumed to do it.*

Is thy family, which was lately hopeful, and flouriſhing, a peaceful tabernacle, now broken up and ſcattered? Thy poſterity, from which thou raiſedſt up to thyſelf great expectations of comfort in old age, cut off? So that thou art now like neither to have a name, or memorial left thee in the earth.

Doſt thou ſit alone, and mourn to think witherto thy hopes and comforts are now come?

Doſt thou read over thoſe words of Job, chap. xxix. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and comment upon them with many tears; "O that I were as "in months paſt, as in the day when God preſerved me! when his "candle ſhined upon my head, and when by his light I walked "through darkneſs! as I was in the days of my youth, when the ſe-"cret of God was upon my tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet "with me, when my children were about me."

Yet let the covenant God hath made with thee, comfort thee in this thy deſolate condition.

You know what domeſtic troubles holy David met with in a ſad ſucceſſion, not only from the death of children, but, which was much worſe, from the wicked lives of his children. There was inceſt, murder, and rebellion in his family; a far ſorer trial than death in their infancy could have been: And yet ſee how ſweetly he relieves himſelf from the covenant of grace, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although "my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an ever-"laſting covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure; for this is all my "ſalvation and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow."

I know this place principally refers to Chriſt, who was to ſpring out of David's family, according to God's covenant made with him in that behalf; and yet I doubt not but it hath another, though leſs principal aſpect upon his own family, over all the afflictions and troubles whereof the covenant of God with him did abundantly comfort him.

And as it comforted him, although his houſe did not increaſe, and

thoſe that were left were not ſuch as he deſired; ſo it may abundantly comfort you alſo, whatever troubles, or deaths, are upon your families, who have an intereſt in the covenant. For,

*Firſt*, If you are God's covenant people, tho' he may afflict, yet he will never forget you, Pſalm iii. 5. he is ever mindful of his covenant: You are as much upon his heart in your deepeſt afflictions, as in the greateſt flouriſh of your proſperity.

You find it hard to forget your child, though it be now turned to a heap of corruption, and loathſome rottenneſs: O how doth your mind run upon it night and day! your thoughts tire not upon that object: Why ſurely it is much more eaſy for you to forget your dear child, whilſt living, and moſt endearing, (much more when dead and undeſirable) than it is for your God to forget you. Iſa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have "compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet "will not I forget thee."

*Can a woman*, the more affectionate ſex, *forget her ſucking child*, her own child, and not a nurſing child? Her own child, whilſt it hangs on the breaſt, and, together with the milk from the breaſt, draws love from its mother's heart; can ſuch a thing as this be in nature? poſſibly it may, for creature-love is fickle, and variable; But, *I will not forget thee*; it is an everlaſting covenant.

*Secondly*, As he will never forget you in your troubles, ſo he will order all your troubles for your good: It is *a well-ordered covenant*, or a covenant orderly diſpoſed; ſo that every thing ſhall work together for your good.

The covenant ſo orders all your trials, ranks and diſpoſes your various troubles ſo, as that they ſhall, in their orders and places, ſweetly co-operate, and join their united influences to make you happy.

Poſſibly you cannot ſee how the preſent affliction ſhould be for your good; you are ready to ſay, with Jacob, Gen. xlii. 36. "Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not; and ye will take Benjamin away; "all theſe things are againſt me." But could you once ſee how ſweetly, and orderly all theſe afflictions work under the bleſſing and influence of the covenant, to your eternal good, you would not only be quiet, but thankful for that which now ſo much afflicts and troubles you.

*Thirdly*, This covenant is not only well ordered in all things, but *ſure*: the mercies contained in it are called, "the ſure mercies of "David," Iſa. lv. 3. Now how ſweet, how ſeaſonable a ſupport doth this conſideration give to God's afflicted under the rod! you lately made yourſelves *ſure* of that creature-comfort which hath forſaken you. It may be, you ſaid of your child, which is now gone, as Lamech ſaid of his ſon Noah, Gen. v. 29. "This ſame ſhall "comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands." Meaning, that his ſon ſhould not only comfort them, by aſſiſting them in the

work of their hands, but alſo, in enjoying the fruit of their toil and pains for him.

Probably ſuch thoughts you have had, and raiſed up to yourſelves great expectations of comfort in your old age from it; but now you ſee you built upon the ſand, and where were you now, if you had not a firmer bottom to build upon? But bleſſed be God, the covenant-mercies are more ſure, and ſolid! God, Chriſt, and heaven, never ſtart or fade, as theſe things do.

The ſweeteſt creature-enjoyments you ever had or have in this world, cannot ſay to you, as your God doth, "I will never leave "thee, nor forſake thee." You muſt part with your dear huſbands, how well ſoever you love them; you muſt bid adieu to the wife of your boſom, how nearly ſoever your affections be linked, and heart delighted in her. Your children and you muſt be ſeparated, though they are to you as your own ſoul.

But though theſe vaniſh away, bleſſed be God there is ſomething that abides. "Though all fleſh be as graſs, and the goodlineſs of it "as the flower of the graſs, though the graſs withereth, and the "flower thereof fadeth, becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth up-"on it; yet the word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever," Iſa. xl. 6, 7, 8. There is ſo much of ſupport contained in this one conſideration, that could but your faith fix here, to realize and apply it, I might lay down my pen at this period, and ſay, the work is done, there needs no more.

Conſideration 9. *The hope of the reſurrection ſhould powerfully reſtrain all exceſſes of ſorrow in thoſe that do profeſs it.*

Let them only mourn without meaſure, who mourn without hope. The huſbandman doth not mourn when he caſts his ſeed-corn into the earth, becauſe he ſows in hope; commits it to the ground with an expectation to receive it again with improvement. Why thus ſtands the caſe here, and juſt ſo the apoſtle ſtates it, 1 Theſſ. iv. 13, 14. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning "them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others which "have no hope; for if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, "even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him."

*Q. d.* Look not upon the dead as a loſt generation; think not that death hath annihilated, and utterly deſtroyed them: O no, they are not dead, but only aſleep; and if they ſleep, they ſhall awake again. You do not uſe to make outcries and lamentations for your children, and friends, when you find them aſleep upon their beds. Why, death is but a longer ſleep, out of which they ſhall as ſurely awake, as ever they did in the morning in this world.

I have often wondered at that golden ſentence in Seneca *, "My "thoughts of the dead (ſaith he) are not as others are; I have fair "and pleaſant apprehenſions of them; for I enjoyed them as one

* *Habui enim illos tanquam amiſſurus, amiſi tanquam habeam.* Seneca, Ep. 63.

" that reckoned I muſt part with them ; and I part with them as one " that makes account to have them."

He ſpeaks, no doubt, of that enjoyment of them, which his pleaſant contemplations of their virtuous actions could give him ; for he was wholly unacquainted with the comfortable, and heart-ſupporting doctrine of the reſurrection. Had he known the advantages which reſult thence, at what a rate may we think he would have ſpoken of the dead, and of their ſtate ? But this you profeſs to believe, and yet ſink at a ſtrange rate. O ſuffer not Gentiliſm to outvie Chriſtianity ; let not Pagans challenge the greateſt Believers, to out-do them in a quiet, and cheerful behaviour under afflictions.

I beſeech thee, reader, if thy deceaſed friend have left thee any ſolid ground of hope that he died intereſted in Chriſt, and the covenant ; that thou wilt diſtinctly ponder theſe admirable ſupports which the doctrine of the reſurrection affords.

*Firſt*, That the ſame body which was ſo pleaſant a ſpectacle to thee, ſhall be reſtored again ; yea, the ſame *numerically*, as well as the ſame *ſpecifically* ; ſo that it ſhall not only be *what* it was, but the *who* it was. " Theſe eyes ſhall behold him, and not another," Job xix. 27. The very ſame body you laid, or are now about to lay in the grave, ſhall be reſtored again : Thou ſhalt find thine own huſband, wife, or child, or friend again : I ſay the ſelf-ſame, and not another.

*Secondly*, And farther, this is ſupporting, that as you ſhall ſee the ſame perſon that was ſo dear to you ; ſo you ſhall know them to be the ſame that were once endeared to you on earth in ſo near a tie of relation.

Indeed you ſhall know them no more in any carnal relation, death diſſolved that bond : But you ſhall know them to be ſuch as once were your dear relations in this world, and be able to ſingle them out among that great multitude, and ſay, this was my father, mother, huſband wife, or child ; this was the perſon for whom I wept and made ſupplication, who was an inſtrument of good to me, or to whoſe ſalvation God then made me inſtrumental.

For we may allow, in that ſtate, all that knowledge which is *cumulative* and *perfective*, whatſoever may enlarge and heighten our felicity and ſatisfaction, as this muſt needs be allowed to do. Luther's judgment in this point, * being aſked by his friends at ſupper the evening before he died, replies thus, *What* (ſaith he) *befel* Adam ? He never ſaw Eve, but was in a deep ſleep when God formed her ; yet when he awaked and ſaw her, he aſked not what ſhe was, nor whence ſhe came ? But ſaith, ſhe was fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone. Now, how knew he that ? He being full of the Holy Ghoſt, and endued with the knowledge of God, ſpake thus : after the ſame

* Melchior Adam, in the life of Luther.

manner we alſo ſhall be in the other life renewed by Chriſt, and ſhall know our parents, our wives, and children.

And this, among other things, was that with which † Auguſtine comforted the lady Italica, after the death of her dear huſband, telling her that ſhe ſhould know him in the world to come among the glorified ſaints. Yea, and a greater than either of theſe, I mean Paul, comforted himſelf, that the Theſſalonians, whom he had converted to Chriſt, ſhould be "his joy and crown of rejoicing, in the preſence "of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming," 1 Theſſ. ii. 19, 20. which muſt needs imply his diſtinct knowledge of them in that day, which muſt be many hundred years after death hath ſeparated them from each other. Whether this knowledge ſhall be by the glorified eyes diſcerning any lineaments or property of individuation remaining upon the glorified bodies of our relations; or whether it ſhall be by immediate revelation, as Adam knew his wife, or as Peter, James, and John knew Moſes and Elias in the mount; as it is difficult to determine, ſo it is needleſs to puzzle ourſelves about it.

It is the concurrent judgment of ſound divines, and it wants not countenance from ſcripture and reaſon, that ſuch a knowledge of them ſhall be in heaven; and then the ſadneſs of this parting will be abundantly recompenſed by the joy of that meeting. Eſpecially conſidering,

*Thirdly*, That at our next meeting, they ſhall be unſpeakably more deſirable, ſweet, and excellent, than ever they were in this world. They had a deſirableneſs in them here, but they were not altogether lovely, and, in every reſpect, deſirable; they had their infirmities, both natural and moral; but all theſe are removed in heaven, and for ever done away: No natural infirmities hang about glorified bodies, or ſinful ones upon perfected ſpirits of the juſt. O what lovely creatures will they appear to you then, when that which is now ſown in diſhonour, ſhall be raiſed in honour! 1 Cor. xv. 43. And then, to crown all,

*Fourthly*, You ſhall have an everlaſting enjoyment of them in heaven, never to part again. The children of the reſurrection can die no more, Luke xx. 36. you ſhall kiſs their pale lips and cold cheeks no more; you ſhall never fear another parting pull, but be together with the Lord for ever, 1 Theſ. iv. 14. And this the apoſtle thought an effectual cordial in this caſe when he exhorted the Theſſalonians to "comfort one another with theſe words."

Conſid. 10. *The preſent felicity into which all that die in Chriſt are preſently admitted, ſhould abundantly comfort Chriſtians over the death of ſuch as either carried a lively hope out of the world with them, or have left good grounds of ſuch an hope behind them.*

Such there are, that carried a lively hope to heaven with them, who could evidence to themſelves and friends, their intereſt in Chriſt

† Aug. Ep. 6.

and in the covenant. Yea, though they had died in ſilence, yet their converſations would ſpeak for them, and the tenor of their lives leave no ground of doubting touching their death. Others dying in their infancy and youth, though they carried not ſuch an actual hope with them, yet they have left good grounds of hope behind them.

Parents, now ponder theſe grounds; you have prayed for them, you have many times wreſtled with the Lord on their behalf; you have taken hold of God's covenant for them, as well as for yourſelves, and dedicated them to the Lord; and they have not, by any actions of theirs, deſtroyed thoſe grounds of your hope, but that you may, with much probability, conclude they are with God.

Why, if the caſe be ſo, what abundant reaſon have you to be quiet, and well ſatisfied with what God hath done? Can they be better than where they are? Had you better proviſions and entertainment for them here than their heavenly Father hath above?

There is no Chriſtian parent in the world, but would rejoice to ſee his child out-ſtrip and get before him in grace, that he may be more eminent in parts and ſervices than ever he was: And what reaſon can be given, why we ſhould not as much rejoice to ſee our children get before us in glory, as in grace? They are gotten to heaven a few years before you, and is that matter of mourning? Would not your child (if he were not ignorant of you) ſay, as Chriſt did to his friends, a little before his death, when he ſaw them caſt down at the thoughts of parting, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would re-"joice, becauſe I go to the Father." q. d. Do not value your own ſenſible comfort, from my bodily preſence with you, before my glory and advancement in heaven. Is this love to me? Or is it not rather ſelf-love?

So would your departed friend ſay to you: 'You have profeſſed 'much love all along to me, my happineſs ſeemed to be very dear to 'you. How comes it to paſs, then, that you mourn ſo exceedingly 'now? This is rather the effect of a fond and fleſhly, than of a 'rational and ſpiritual love; if you loved me with a pure ſpiritual 'love, ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Father. It is infi-'nitely better for me to be here, than with you on earth, under ſin 'and ſorrow. Weep not for me, but for yourſelves.'

Alas! though you want your friends company, he wants not yours; your care was to provide for this child, but Jeſus Chriſt hath provided infinitely better for it than you could; you intended an eſtate, but he a kingdom for it; you thought upon ſuch or ſuch a match, but Chriſt hath forbid all others, and maried your child to himſelf. Would you imagine a higher preferment for the fruit of your bodies?

A King from heaven hath ſent for your friend, and do you grudge at the journey? O think, and think again, what an honour it is to you, that Chriſt hath taken them out of your boſom, and laid them

in his own; ſtript them out of thoſe garments you provided, and cloathed them in white robes, waſhed in the blood of the Lamb. Let not your hearts be troubled, rather rejoice exceedingly, that God made you inſtruments to repleniſh heaven, and bring forth an heir for the kingdom of God.

Your child is now glorifying God, in an higher way than you can, and what though you have loſt its bodily preſence for a time; yet, I hope, you do not reckon that to be your loſs, which turns to God's greater glory.

When Jacob heard his Joſeph was lord of Egypt, he rather wiſhed himſelf with Joſeph, than his Joſeph with him in wants and ſtraits; ſo ſhould it be with you: You are yet rolling and toſſing upon a tempeſtuous ſea, but your friend is gone into the quiet harbour; deſire rather to be there than that he were at ſea with you again.

Conſideration 11. *Conſider how vain a thing all your troubles and ſelf-vexation is; it no way betters your caſe, nor eaſes your burden.*

As a bullock, by wreſtling and ſweating in the furrow, makes his yoke to be more heavy, and galls his neck, and ſpends his ſtrength the ſooner, and no ways helps himſelf by that: Why thus ſtands the caſe with thee; if thou be as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke, what Chriſt ſaith of *caring*, we may ſay of *grieving*, (Matth. vi. 27.) "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his ſta-"ture?"

Cares may break our ſleep, yea, break our hearts, but they cannot add to our ſtature, either in a natural, or in a civil notion: So our ſorrowing may ſooner break our hearts, than the yoke God hath laid on you.

Alas! what is all this but as the fluttering of a bird in the net, which, inſtead of freeing, doth but the more entangle itſelf. It was therefore a wiſe reſolution of David, in this very caſe, when the will of God was ſignified in the death of his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "But "now he is dead, wherefore ſhould I faſt? Can I bring him back "again? I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me."

Can I bring him back again? No; I can no more alter the purpoſe and work of God, than I can change the ſeaſons of the year, or alter the courſe of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, or diſturb the order of the day and night; which are all unalterably eſtabliſhed by a firm conſtitution and ordinance of heaven.

As theſe ſeaſons cannot be changed by man, ſo neither can this courſe and way of his providences be changed. Job xxiii. 13. "He "is of one mind, and who can turn him? And what his ſoul deſireth, "even that he doth." Indeed, while his pleaſure and purpoſe are unknown to us, there is room for faſting and prayer, to prevent the thing we fear: But when the purpoſe of God is manifeſted in the iſſue, and the ſtroke is given, then it is the vaineſt thing in the world to fret and vex ourſelves, as David's ſervants thought he would do, as ſoon as he ſhould hear the child was dead: But he was wiſer than

ſo, his tears and cries to God before had the nature and uſe of means to prevent the affliction; but when it was come, and could not be prevented, then they were of no uſe, to no purpoſe in the world: "Wherefore ſhould I faſt?" *Q. d.* To what end, uſe, or purpoſe will it be now?

Well then, caſt not away your ſtrength and ſpirits to no advantage; reſerve them for future exerciſes and trials: Time may come, that you may need all the ſtrength you have, and much more, to ſupport greater burdens than this.

Conſideration 12. *The Lord is able to reſtore all your loſt comforts in relations double to you, if you meekly ſubmit to him, and patiently wait upon him under the rod.*

When Eſau had loſt his bleſſing, he ſaid, "Haſt thou but one "bleſſing, my Father?" Gen. xxvii. 38. But your Father hath more bleſſings for you than one; his name is the "Father of mer-"cies," 2 Cor. xiii. 11. He can beget and create as many mercies for you as he pleaſeth; relations, and the comforts of them, are at his command.

It is but a few months, or years paſt, and theſe comforts, whoſe loſs you now lament, were not in being; nor did you know whence they ſhould ariſe to you, yet the Lord gave the word, and commanded them for you; and, if he pleaſe, he can make the death of theſe but like a ſcythe to the meadow that is mown down, or a razor to the head that is ſhaved bare; which, though it lay you under the preſent trouble and reproach of barrenneſs, yet doth but make way for a double increaſe, a ſecond ſpring, with advantage.

So that even as it was with the captive church, in reſpect of her ſpecial children, in the day of her captivity and reproach, the Lord made up all with advantage to her, even to her own aſtoniſhment. Iſa. xlii. 20. "The children which thou ſhalt have, after thou haſt "loſt the other, ſhall ſay again in thine ears, the place is too ſtrait "for me; Give place to me that I may dwell."

Thus may he deal with you, as to your natural children, and relations; ſo that what the man of God ſaid to Amaziah, 1 Chron. xxv. 9. may be applied to the caſe in hand. "Amaziah ſaid to the "man of God, but what ſhall we do for the hundred talents? And "the man of God anſwered, the Lord is able to give thee much "more than this."

O ſay not, What ſhall I do for friends and relations? Death hath robbed me of all comfort in them. Why, the Lord is able to give you much more. But then, as ever you expect to ſee your future bleſſings multiplied, look to it, and be careful that you neither diſhonour God, nor grieve him, by your unſubmiſſive, and impatient carriage, under the preſent rod.

God took away all Job's children, and that at one ſtroke, and the ſtroke immediate and extraordinary, and that when they were grown up, and planted (at leaſt ſome of them) in diſtinct families; yea,

whilſt they were endearing each other by mutual expreſſions of affection. This muſt be yielded to be an extraordinary trial, yet he meekly receives, and patiently bears it from the hand of the Lord.

You have heard of the patience of Job, (ſaith the apoſtle James v. 11.) "and ſeen the end of the Lord." Not only the gracious end, or intention of the Lord in all his afflictions, but the happy end and iſſue the Lord gave to all his afflictions, of which you have the account, Job xlii. 10. "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had "before." The number of his children was not double to what he had, as all his other comforts were: But though the Lord only reſtored the ſame number to him again that he took away, yet it is likely the comfort he had in theſe latter children was double to what he had in the former. There is nothing loſt by waiting patiently, and ſubmitting willingly to the Lord's diſpoſe.

It is as eaſy with the Lord to revive, as it is to remove your comforts in relations. There is a ſweet expreſſion to this purpoſe, in Pſal. lxxxi. 28. "For thou, Lord, will light my candle, the Lord "my God will enlighten my darkneſs."

Every comfortable enjoyment, whether it be in relations, eſtate, health, or friends, is a candle lighted by providence for our comforts in this world, and they are but candles, which will not always laſt; and thoſe that laſt longeſt will be conſumed and waſted at laſt; but oftentimes it falls out with them as with candles, they are blown out before they are half conſumed; yea, almoſt as ſoon as lighted up, and then we are in darkneſs for the preſent.

It is a dark hour with us, when theſe comforts are put out; but David's faith did, and ours may comfort us with this, that he that blew out the candle, can light up another: "Thou, Lord, ſhalt light my "candle, the Lord my God ſhall enlighten my darkneſs." That is, the Lord will renew my comforts, alter the preſent ſad ſtate I am in, and chaſe away that trouble and darkneſs which at preſent lies upon me: Only beware of offending him, at whoſe beck your lights and comforts come and go. Michal diſpleaſed the Lord, and therefore had no child unto the day of her death, 2 Sam. vi. 23.

Hannah waited humbly upon the Lord for the bleſſing of children, and the Lord remembered her; he enlightened her condition with that comfort, when ſhe was as a lamp deſpiſed. There is no comfort you have loſt but God can reſtore it, yea, double it in kind, if he ſees it convenient for you. And if not, then,

Conſideration 13. *Conſider, though he ſhould deny you any more comforts of that kind, yet he hath far better to beſtow upon you, ſuch as theſe deſerve not to be named with.*

You have an excellent Scripture to this purpoſe, in Iſa. lvi. 4, 5. "For thus ſaith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my ſabbaths; "and chuſe the things that pleaſe me, and take hold of my cove- "nant; even to them will I give in my houſe, and within my walls, "a place, and a name better than of ſons and daughters; I will give

" them an everlaſting name, that ſhall not be cut off."

Men's names are to be continued in their iſſue, in their male iſſue eſpecially, and conſequently to fail in ſuch as wanted iſſue, Num. xvii. 4. and a numerous iſſue is deemed no ſmall honour, Pſal. cxxvii. 4, 5. God therefore promiſed here to ſupply, and make good the want of iſſue, and whatſoever, either honour here, or memorial hereafter, might from it have accrued to them, by beſtowing upon them matter of far greater honour, and more durable; a name better, or before the names of ſons or daughters.

*See Engliſh Annotations on the place.*

It is a greater honour to be the child of God, than to have the greateſt honour, or comfort, that ever children afforded their parents in this world.

Poor heart, thou art now dejected by this affliction that lies upon thee, as if all joy and comfort were now cut off from thee in this world.

A cloud dwells upon all other comforts, this affliction hath ſo imbittered thy ſoul, that thou taſteſt no more in any other earthly comforts, than in the white of an egg. O that thou didſt but conſider the conſolations that are with God for ſuch as anſwer his ends in affliction, and patiently wait on him for their comfort! he hath comforts for you far tranſcending the joy of children.

This ſome have found when their children have been cut off from them, and that in ſo eminent a degree, that they have little valued their comfort in children, in compariſon with this comfort.

I will therefore ſet down a pregnant inſtance of the point in hand, as I find it recorded by the grave and worthy author of that excellent book intituled, *The fulfilling of the ſcripture.*

Another notable inſtance of grace, with a very remarkable paſſage in his condition, I ſhall here mention. 'One Patrick Mackewrath, 'who lived in the weſt parts of Scotland, whoſe heart, in a remark-'able way the Lord touched, and after his converſion (as he ſhew-'ed to many Chriſtian friends) was in ſuch a frame, ſo affected with 'a new world, wherein he was entered, the diſcoveries of God, and 'of a life to come; that for ſome months together he did ſeldom 'ſleep, but was ſtill taken up in wondering. His life was very re-'markable for tenderneſs, and near converſe with God in his walk; 'and, which was worthy to be noted, one day, after a ſharp trial, 'having his only ſon ſuddenly taken away by death, he retired alone 'for ſeveral hours, and when he came forth did look ſo cheerfully, 'that to thoſe who aſked him the reaſon thereof, and wondered at 'the ſame in ſuch a time; he told them, He had got that in his re-'tirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed, he 'would be content to loſe a ſon every day.'

O what a ſweet exchange had he made! Surely he had gold for braſs, a pearl for a pebble, a treaſure for a trifle; for ſo great, yea, and far greater is the diſproportion betwixt the ſweet light of God's countenance, and the faint, dim light of the beſt creature-enjoyment.

Would it pleaſe the Lord to make this ſun ariſe and ſhine upon you, now when the ſtars that ſhined with a dim and borrowed light are gone down, you would ſee ſuch gain by the exchange as would quickly make you caſt in your votes with him we now mentioned, and ſay, Lord, let every day be ſuch as this funeral day; let all my hours be as this, ſo that I may ſee and taſte what I now do. How gladly would I part with the deareſt and neareſt creature-comforts I own in this world. The gracious and tender Lord hath his divine cordials reſerved on purpoſe for ſuch ſad hours; theſe are ſometimes given before ſome ſharp trial, to prepare for it, and ſometimes after, to ſupport under it.

I have often heard it from the mouth, and found it in the *diary* of a ſweet Chriſtian now with God, that a little before the Lord removed her dear huſband by death, there was ſuch an abundant outlet of the love of God unto her ſoul for ſeveral days and nights following, that when the Lord took away her huſband by death, though he was a gracious and ſweet tempered (and by her moſt tenderly beloved) huſband, ſhe was ſcarce ſenſible of the ſtroke, but carried quite above all earthly things, their comforts, and their troubles: ſo that ſhe had almoſt loſt the thoughts of her dear huſband in God. And had not the Lord taken this courſe with her, ſhe concluded that blow had not been poſſible to be borne by her, ſhe muſt have ſunk without ſuch a preparative.

A huſband, a wife, a child, are great, very great things, as they ſtand by other creatures; but ſurely they will ſeem little things, and next to nothing, when the Lord ſhall ſet himſelf by them before the ſoul.

And how know you, but God hath bidden theſe earthly comforts ſtand aſide this day, to make way for heavenly ones? It may be, God is coming to communicate himſelf more ſweetly, more ſenſibly than ever to your ſouls; and theſe are the providences which muſt caſt up, and prepare the way of the Lord. Poſſibly God's meaning in their death is but this: child, ſtand aſide, thou art in my way, and filleſt my place in thy parent's heart.

Conſideration 14. *Be careful you exceed not in your grief for the loſs of earthly things, conſidering that Satan takes the advantage of all extremes.*

You cannot touch any extreme, but you will be touched by that enemy, whoſe greateſt advantages lie in aſſaulting you here.

Satan is called, *The ruler of the darkneſs of this world*, Eph. vi. 12. i. e. his kingdom is ſupported by darkneſs. Now, there is a twofold darkneſs, which gives Satan great advantage; the darkneſs of the *mind*, viz ignorance; and the darkneſs of the *condition*, viz. trouble and affliction. Of the former the apoſtle ſpeaks chiefly in that text; but the latter alſo is by him often improved to carry on his deſigns upon us. When it is a dark hour of trouble with us, then is his fitteſt ſeaſon to tempt.

That cowardly ſpirit falls upon the people of God when they are down and low in ſpirit as well as ſtate. Satan would never have de-

fired that the hand of God ſhould have been ſtretched out upon Job's perſon, eſtate, and children, but that he promiſed himſelf a notable advantage therein, to poiſon his ſpirit with vile thoughts of God. "Do this (ſaith he) and he will curſe thee to thy face."

What the Pſalmiſt obſerves of *natural*, is as true of *metaphorical* darkneſs, Pſal. civ. 20. "Thou makeſt darkneſs, and it is night, where-"in all the beaſts of the foreſt do creep forth, the young lions roar "after their prey."

When it is dark night with men, it is noon-day with Satan; i. e. our ſuffering time is his buſieſt working-time; many a diſmal ſuggeſtion he then plants, and grafts upon your affliction, which are much more dangerous to us than the affliction itſelf.

Sometimes he injects *deſponding* thoughts into the afflicted ſoul; "Then, ſaid I, I am cut off from before thine eyes," Pſal. xxxi. 22. and Lam. iii. 18, 19. "My hope is periſhed from the Lord, remem-"bering my affliction, and my miſer, the wormwood and the gall."

Sometimes he ſuggeſts *hard* thoughts of God. Ruth. i. 20. "The "Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me." Yea, that he hath dealt more ſeverely with us than any other, Lam. i. 12. "See and behold, "if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, "wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce "anger."

And ſometimes murmuring and repining thoughts againſt the Lord; the ſoul is diſpleaſed at the hand of God upon it. Jonah was angry at the hand of God, and ſaid, "I do well to be angry, even "unto death," Jonah iv. 9. What diſmal thoughts are theſe? and how much more afflictive to a gracious ſoul, than the loſs of any outward enjoyment in this world.

And ſometimes very *irreligious* and *atheiſtical* thoughts, as if there were no privilege to be had by religion, and all our pains, zeal, and care about duty, were little better than loſt labour, Pſal. lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands "in innocency; for all the day long I have been plagued, and chaſ-"tened every morning."

By theſe things Satan gets no ſmall advantage upon the afflicted Chriſtian; for albeit theſe thoughts are his burden, and God will not impute them to the condemnation of his people; yet they rob the ſoul of peace, and hinder it from duty, and make it act uncomely under affliction, to the ſtumbling and hardening of others in their ſin: beware therefore, leſt by your exceſſes of ſorrow ye give place to the devil; we are not ignorant of his devices.

Conſideration 15. *Give no way to exceſſive ſorrows upon the account of affliction, if ye have any regard to the honour of God and religion, which will hereby be expoſed to reproach.*

If you ſlight your own honour, do not ſlight the honour of God and religion too; take heed how you carry it in a day of trouble; many

eyes are upon you. It is a true obſervation that a late worthy * author hath made upon this caſe: 'What will the Atheiſt, and what will 'the profane ſcoffer ſay when they ſhall ſee this? So fottiſh and ma- 'licious they are, that if they do but ſee you in affliction, they are 'ſtraightway ſcornfully demanding, Where is your God?

'But what would they ſay, if they ſhould hear you yourſelves un- 'believingly cry out, Where is our God? Will they not be ready to 'cry, this is the religion they make ſuch boaſt of, which you ſee how 'little it does for them in a day of extremity: they talk of promiſes, 'rich and precious promiſes; but where are they now? Or to what 'purpoſe do they ſerve? They ſaid they had a treaſure in heaven; 'what ails them to mourn ſo then if their riches are there?'

O beware what you do before the world; they have eyes to ſee what you can do, as well as ears to hear what you can ſay: and as long as your carriage under trouble is ſo much like their own, they will never think your principles are better than theirs. Carnal worldlings will be drawn to think, that whatever fine talk you might have about God and heaven, your hearts were moſt upon the ſame things that theirs were, ſince your grief for their removal is as great as theirs.

They know by experience what a ſtay it is to the heart, to have an able, faithful friend to depend upon, or to have hopes of a great eſtate ſhortly to fall to them; and they will never be perſuaded you have any ſuch ground of comfort if they ſee you as much caſt down as they that pretend to no ſuch matter.

By this means the precepts of Chriſt to conſtancy and contentment in all eſtates, will come to be looked upon (like thoſe of the *ſtoics*) only as *magnifica verba*, brave words; but ſuch as are impoſſible to be practiſed; and the whole of the goſpel will be taken for an airy notion, ſince they that profeſs greateſt regard to it, are no more helped thereby.

O what a ſhame is it that religion ſhould, in this caſe, make no more difference betwixt man and man! wherefore ſhew to the world (whatever their common cenſures are) that it is not ſo much your care to differ from them in ſome opinions, and a little ſtrictneſs, as in humility, meekneſs, contempt of the world, and heavenly-mindedneſs; and now let theſe graces diſplay themſelves by your cheerful, patient deportment under all your grievances.

Wherefore hath God planted thoſe excellent graces in your ſouls? but that he might be glorified, and you benefited by the exerciſes of them in tribulation: ſhould theſe be ſuppreſſed and hid, and nothing but the pride, paſſion, and unmortified earthlineſs of your hearts ſet on work, and diſcovered in time of trouble, what a ſlur, what a wound will you give to the glorious name which is called upon by you? And then if your hearts be truly gracious, that will pierce you deeper than ever your affliction which occaſioned it did.

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* *M. M. his appendix to Solomon's preſcription, p.* 2.

I beſeech you, therefore, be tender of the name of God, if you will not be ſo of your own peace and comfort.

Conſid. 16. *Be quiet, and hold your peace, you little know how many mercies lie in the womb of this affliction.*

Great are the benefits of a ſharp, rouzing affliction to the people of God at ſometimes, and all might have them at all times, were they more careful to improve them. Holy David thankfully acknowledgeth, Pſal. cxix. 71. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

And ſurely there is as much good in them for you, as for him; if the Lord ſanctify them to ſuch ends and uſes as his were ſanctified unto.

Such a ſmarting rod as this came not before there was need enough of it, and poſſibly you ſaw the need of ſome awakening providence yourſelves; but if not, the Lord did: he took not up the rod to ſmite you, till his faithfulneſs and tender love to your ſouls called upon him to correct you.

You now ſit penſive under the rod, ſadly lamenting and deploring he loſs of ſome earthly comfort; your heart is ſurcharged with ſorrow, your eyes run down upon every mention and remembrance of your dear friend: why, if there were no more, this alone may diſcover the need you had of this rod; for doth not all this ſorrow at parting plainly ſpeak how much your heart was ſet upon, how faſt your heart was glewed to this earthly comfort?

Now you ſee that your affections were ſunk many degrees deeper into the creature, than you are aware of: and what ſhould God do in this caſe by you? Should he ſuffer you do cleave to the creature more and more? Should he permit it to purloin, and exhauſt your love and delight, and ſteal away your heart from himſelf? This he could not do, and love you. The more impatient you are under this affliction, the more need you had of it.

And what if by this ſtroke the Lord will awaken your drowzy ſoul, and recover you out of that pleaſant, but dangerous ſpiritual ſlumber you were fallen into, whilſt you had pillowed your head upon this pleaſant, ſenſible creature-enjoyment? Is not this really better for you than if he ſhould ſay, Sleep on: he is joined to idols, let him alone; he is departing from me, the fountain, to a broken ciſtern; let him go.

Yea, what if by this ſtroke upon one of the pleaſanteſt things you had in this world, God will diſcover to you, more ſenſibly and effectually than ever, the vanity both of that and all earthly comforts, ſo as that you ſhall from henceforth never let forth your heart, your hope, your love, and delight to any of them, as you did before? You could talk before of the creature's vanity, but I queſtion whether ever you had ſo clear and convincing a ſight of its vanity as you have this day: and is not this a conſiderable mercy in your eyes?

Now, if ever God is weaning you from all fond opinions, and vain expectations from this world; by this your *judgment* of the creature

is *rectified*, and your *affections* to all other enjoyments on earth *moderated*: and is this nothing? O doubtleſs it is a greater mercy to you, than to have your friend alive again.

And what if by this rod your wandering, gadding heart ſhall be whipped home to God? your neglected duties revived? your decayed communion with God reſtored? a ſpiritual, heavenly frame of heart recovered? What will you ſay then?

Surely you will bleſs that merciful hand which removed the obſtructions, and adore the Divine wiſdom, and goodneſs, that by ſuch a device as this recovered you to himſelf. Now you can pray more conſtantly, more ſpiritually, more affectionately than before. O bleſſed rod, which buds and bloſſoms with ſuch fruits as theſe! Let this be written among your beſt mercies, for you ſhall have cauſe to adore and bleſs God eternally for this beneficial affliction.

Conſideration 17. *Suffer not yourſelves to be tranſported by impatience, and ſwallowed up of grief, becauſe God hath exerciſed you under a ſmart rod; for, as ſmarting as it is, it is comparatively a gentle ſtroke to what others, as good as yourſelves, have felt.*

Your dear relation is dead; be it ſo, here is but a ſingle death before you, but others have ſeen many deaths contrived into one upon their relations, to which yours is nothing.

*The fulfilling of the Scriptures.*

Zedekiah ſaw his children murdered before his eyes, and then had thoſe eyes (alas! too late) put out. The worthy author of that excellent book before-mentioned, tells us of a choice, and godly gentlewoman in the north of Ireland, who when the rebellion broke out there, fled with three children, one of them upon the breaſt; they had not gone far before they were ſtripped naked by the Iriſh, who, to their admiration, ſpared their lives, (it is like, concluding that cold and hunger would kill them) afterwards going on at the foot of a river which runs to Lochneach, others met them, and would have caſt them into the river; but this godly woman, not diſmayed, aſked a little liberty to pray, and as ſhe lay naked on the frozen ground, got reſolution not to go on her own feet, to ſo unjuſt a death, upon which having called her, and ſhe refuſing, was dragged by the heels along that rugged way, to be caſt in with her little ones, and company.

But ſhe then turned, and on her knees ſays, You ſhould, I am ſure, be Chriſtians, and men I ſee you are; in taking away our miſerable lives, you do us a pleaſure; but know, that as we never wronged you nor yours, you muſt remember to die alſo yourſelves, and one day give an account of this cruelty, to the Judge of heaven and earth. Hereupon they reſolved not to murder them with their own hands, but turned them all naked upon a ſmall iſland in the river, without any proviſion, there to periſh.

The next day, the two boys having crept aſide, found the hide of a beaſt which had been killed, at the root of a tree, which the mother caſt over them lying upon the ſnow. The next day a little boat

goes by, unto whom ſhe calls for God's ſake to take them in, but they being Iriſh, refuſed; ſhe deſired a little bread, but they ſaid they had none; then ſhe begs a coal of fire, which ſhe obtained; and thus, with ſome fallen chips, made a little fire, and the children taking a piece of the hide laid it on the coals, and began to gnaw the leather; but without an extraordinary Divine ſupport, what could this do?

Thus they lived ten days, without any viſible means of help, having no bread, but ice and ſnow, nor drink except water. The two boys being near ſtarved, ſhe preſſed them to go out of her ſight, not being able to ſee their death; yet God delivered them as miraculouſly at laſt, as he had ſupported them all that while.

But judge whether a natural death, in an ordinary way be comparable to ſuch a trial as this; and yet thus the Lord did by this choice and eminently gracious woman.

And Mr Wall, in his *None-but-Chriſt*, relates as ſad a paſſage of a poor family in Germany, who were driven unto that extremity in the famine, that at laſt the parents made a motion one to the other to ſell one of the children for bread to ſuſtain themſelves, and the reſt; but when they came to conſider which child it ſhould be, their hearts ſo relented, and yearned upon every one, that they reſolved rather all to die together. Yea, we read in Lam. iv. 10. "The hands of "the pitiful women have ſodden their own children."

But why ſpeak I of theſe extremities? How many parents, yea, ſome godly ones too, have lived to ſee their children dying in prophaneneſs, and ſome by the hand of juſtice, lamenting their rebellions with a rope about their necks.

Ah! reader, little doſt thou know what ſtings there are in the afflictions of others! ſurely you have no reaſon to think the Lord hath dealt more bitterly with you than any. It is a gentle ſtroke, a merciful diſpenſation, if you compare it with what others have felt.

Conſideration 18. *If God be your God, you have really loſt nothing by the removal of any creature-comfort.*

God is the fountain of all true comfort; creatures, the very beſt and ſweeteſt, are but ciſterns to receive, and convey to us what comfort God is pleaſed to communicate to them; and if the ciſtern be broken, or the pipe cut off, ſo that no more comfort can be conveyed to us that way, he hath other ways and mediums to do it by, which we think not of; and if he pleaſe he can convey his comforts to his people without any of them: And if he do it more immediately, we ſhall be no loſers by that; for no comforts in the world are ſo delectable, and raviſhingly ſweet, as thoſe that flow immediately from the fountain.

And it is the ſenſuality of our hearts that cauſes us to affect them ſo inordinately, and grieve for the loſs of them ſo immoderately, as if we had not enough in God, without theſe creature ſupplements.

Is the fulneſs of the fountain yours? and yet do you caſt down yourſelves, becauſe the broken ciſtern is removed; The beſt creatures are no better, Jer. ii. 13. Ciſterns have nothing but what they receive, and broken ones cannot hold what is put into them. Why then do you mourn, as if your life were bound up in the creature? You have as free an exceſs to the fountain as you had before. It is the advice of an Heathen, (and let them take the comfort of it) to repair, by a new earthly comfort, what we have loſt in the former.

"Thou haſt carried forth him whom thou lovedſt, (ſaith * Seneca) "ſeek one whom thou mayeſt love in his ſtead: It is better to repair "than to bemoan thy loſs."

But if God never repair your loſs in things of the ſame kind, you know he can abundantly repair it in himſelf.

Ah! Chriſtian, is not one kiſs of his mouth, one glimpſe of his countenance, one ſeal of his Spirit, a more ſweet and ſubſtantial comfort, than the ſweeteſt relation in this world can afford you? If the ſtream fail, repair to the fountain, there is enough ſtill; God is where he was, and what he was, though the creature be not.

Conſideration 19. *Though you may want a little comfort in your life, yet ſurely it may be recompenſed to you by a more eaſy death.*

The removal of your friends before you may turn to your great advantage, when your hour is come that you muſt follow them. O how have many good ſouls been clogged and enſnared in their dying hour, by the loves, cares, and fears they have had about thoſe they muſt leave behind them in a ſinful, evil world!

Your love to them might have proved a ſnare to you, and cauſed you to hang back, as loth to go hence; for theſe are the things that make men loth to die. And thus it might have been with you, except God had removed them before-hand, or ſhould give you in that day ſuch ſights of heaven, and taſtes of divine love, as ſhould maſter and mortify all your earthly affections to theſe things.

I knew a gracious perſon, (now in heaven) who, for many weeks in her laſt ſickneſs, complained that ſhe found it hard to part with a dear relation, and that there was nothing proved a greater clog to her ſoul than this: It is much more eaſy to think of going to our friends, who are in heaven before us, than of parting with them, and leaving our deſirable and dear ones behind us.

And who knows what cares and diſtracting thoughts you may then be peſtered and diſtracted with upon their account? What ſhall become of theſe when I am gone? I am now to leave them, God knows to what wants, miſeries, temptations, and afflictions in the midſt of a decitful, defiling, dangerous world.

I know it is our duty to leave our fatherleſs children, and friendleſs relations with God; to truſt them with him that gave them to us:

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* *Quem amabas extuliſti, quære quem ames: Sattus eſt amicum reparare quam flere.*—Senec. Epiſt. p. 637.

And ſome have been enabled cheerfully to do ſo when they were parting from them. * Luther could ſay, "Lord, thou haſt given "me a wife and children, I have little to leave them; nouriſh, "teach, and keep them; O thou Father of the fatherleſs, and "Judge of the widow." But every Chriſtian hath not a Luther's faith; ſome find it a hard thing to diſentangle their affections at ſuch a time: But now, if God has ſent all yours before you, you have ſo much the leſs to do; death may be eaſier to you than others.

Conſideration 20. *But if nothing that hath been yet ſaid will ſtick with you, then, laſtly, remember that you are near that ſtate, and place which admits no ſorrows, nor ſad reflections, upon any ſuch accounts as theſe.*

Yet a little while, and you ſhall not miſs them, you ſhall not need them, but you ſhall live as the angels of God: We now live partly by faith, partly by ſenſe, partly upon God, and partly upon the creature; our ſtate is mixed, therefore our comforts are ſo too. But when God ſhall be all in all, and we ſhall be as the angels of God in the way and manner of our living; how much will the caſe be altered with us then, from what it is now?

Angels neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither ſhall the children of the reſurrection; when the days of our ſinning are ended, the days of our mourning ſhall be ſo too. No graves were opened till ſin entered, and no more ſhall be opened when ſin is excluded.

Our glorified relations ſhall live with us for ever; they ſhall complain no more, die no more; yea, this is the happineſs of that ſtate to which you are paſſing on, that your ſouls being in the neareſt conjunction with God, the fountain of joy, you ſhall have no concernment out of him. You ſhall not be put upon theſe exerciſes of patience, nor ſubjected to ſuch ſorrows as you now feel, any more. It is but a little while, and the end of all theſe things will come. O therefore bear up, as perſons that expect ſuch a day of jubilee at hand.

And thus I have finiſhed the ſecond general head of this diſcourſe, which is a diſſuaſive from the ſin of immoderate ſorrow.

3. I now proceed to the third thing propoſed, namely, to remove the pleas and excuſes for this immoderate grief. It is natural to men, yea, to good men, to juſtify their exceſſes, or at leaſt to extenuate them, by pleading for their paſſions, as if they wanted not cauſe, and reaſon enough to excuſe them. If theſe be fully anſwered, and the ſoul once convinced, and left without apology for its ſin, it is then in a fair way for its cure, which is the laſt thing deſigned in this treatiſe.

My preſent buſineſs, therefore is, to ſatisfy thoſe objections, and anſwer thoſe reaſons which are commonly pleaded in this caſe, to juſtify our exceſſive grief for loſt relations. And tho' I ſhall carry it in that line of relation to which the text directs, yet it is equally applicable to all others.

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* Melchior Adam, in the life of Luther.

*Plea* 1. You preſs me by many great conſiderations to meekneſs and quiet ſubmiſſion under this heavy ſtroke of God; but you little know what ſtings my ſoul feels now in it.

The child was a child of many prayers, it was a Samuel begged of the Lord, and I concluded when I had it, that it brought with it the returns and anſwers of many prayers. But now I ſee it was nothing leſs; God had no regard to my prayer about it, nor was it given me in that ſpecial way of mercy, as I imagined it to be: My child is not only dead, but my prayers in the ſame day ſhut out and denied.

*Anſwer* 1. That you prayed for your children before you had them, was your duty; and if you prayed not for them ſubmiſſively, referring it to the pleaſure of God to give, or deny them, to continue or remove them, as ſhould ſeem good to him, that was your ſin: You ought not to limit the Holy One of Iſrael, nor preſcribe to him, or capitulate with him, for what term you ſhall enjoy your outward comforts: If you did ſo, it was your evil, and God hath juſtly rebuked it by this ſtroke. If you did pray conditionally, and ſubmiſſively referring both the mercy aſked and continuance of it to the will of God, as you ought to do; then there is nothing in the death of your child that croſſes the true ſcope and intent in your prayer.

*Anſwer* 2. your prayers may be anſwered, though the thing prayed for be with-held, yea, or though it ſhould be given for a little while, and ſnatched away from you again. There are four ways of God's anſwering prayers, by giving the thing prayed for preſently, Dan. ix. 23. or by ſuſpending the anſwer for a time, and giving it afterwards, Luke xviii. 7. or by with-holding from you that mercy which you aſk, and giving you a much better mercy in the room of it, Deut. iii. 24. compared with Deut. xxxiv. 4, 5. Or, laſtly, by giving you patience to bear the loſs, or want of it, 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Now, if the Lord have taken away your child, or friend, and in lieu thereof given you a meek, quiet, ſubmiſſive heart to his will, you need not ſay he hath ſhut out your cry.

*Plea* 2. But I have loſt a lovely, obliging, and moſt endearing child, one that was beautiful and ſweet; it is a ſtony heart that would not diſſolve into tears for the loſs of one ſo deſirable, ſo engaging as this was: Ah! it is no common loſs.

*Anſwer* 1. The more lovely and engaging your relation was, the more excellent will your patience and contentment with the will of God in its death be; the more lovelineſs, the more ſelf-denial, the more grace. Had it been a thouſand times more endearingly ſweet than it was, it was not too good to deny for God. If therefore obedience to the will of God do indeed maſter natural affections, and that you look upon patience and contentment as much more beautiful than the ſweeteſt and moſt deſirable enjoyment on earth, it may turn to you for a teſtimony of the truth and ſtrength of grace: that you can, like Abraham, part with a child whom you ſo dearly love, in obedience to the will of your God, whom you love infinitely more.

*Anſwer* 2. The lovelineſs and beauty of our children and relations, though it muſt be acknowledged a good gift from the hand of God; yet it is but a common gift, and oftentimes becomes a ſnare, and is, in its own nature, but a tranſitory, vaniſhing thing, and therefore no ſuch great aggravation of the loſs as is pretended.

I ſay, it is but a common gift; Eliab, Adonijah, and Abſalom had as lovely preſences as any in their generation. Yea, it is not only common to the wicked, with the godly, but to the brute animals, as well as men, and to moſt that excel in it, it becomes a temptation; the ſouls of ſome had been more beautiful and lovely, if their bodies had been leſs ſo. Beſides, it is but a flower which nouriſhes in its mouth, and then fades. This therefore ſhould not be reflected on as ſo great a circumſtance to aggravate your trouble.

*Anſwer* 3. But if your relation ſleep in Jeſus, he will appear ten thouſand times more lovely in the morning of the reſurrection, than ever he was in the world. What is the exacteſt, pureſt beauty of mortals, to the incomparable beauty of the ſaints in the reſurrection? "Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of "their Father," Matth. xiii. 43. In this hope you part with them, therefore act ſuitably to your hopes.

*Plea* 3. Oh! but my child was nipped off by death in the very bud; I did but ſee, and love, and part: Had I enjoyed it longer, and had time to ſuck out the ſweetneſs of ſuch an enjoyment, I could have borne it eaſier; but its months or years with me were ſo few, that they only ſerved to raiſe an expectation which was quickly, and therefore the more ſadly diſappointed.

*Anſwer* 1. Did your friend die young, or was the bond of any other relation diſſolved almoſt as ſoon as made? Let not this ſeem ſo intolerable a load to you; for if you have ground to hope they died in Chriſt, then they lived long enough in this world*. It is truly ſaid, he hath ſailed long enough that hath won the harbour; he hath fought long enough that hath obtained the victory; he hath run long enough that hath touched the goal; and he hath lived long enough upon earth that hath won heaven, be his days here never ſo few.

*Anſwer* 2. The ſooner your relation died, the leſs ſin hath been committed, and the leſs ſorrow felt: What can you ſee in this world but ſin or ſorrow? A quick paſſage through it to glory is a ſpecial privilege. Surely the world is not ſo deſirable a place, that Chriſtians ſhould deſire an hour's time longer in it for themſelves, or theirs, than ſerves to fit them for a better.

*Anſwer* 3. And whereas you imagine the parting would have been eaſier if the enjoyment had been longer, it is a fond and groundleſs ſuſpicion: The longer you had enjoyed them, the ſtronger would the endearments have been. A young and tender plant may be eaſily

* *Vide* Mr Baxter's Epiſtle to the life of Mr John Janeway.

drawn up by a ſingle hand; but when it hath ſpread and fixed its root many years in the earth, it will require many a ſtrong blow, and hard tug to root it up. Affections, like thoſe under-ground roots, are fixed and ſtrengthened by nothing more than conſuetude and long-poſſeſſion; it is much eaſier parting now, than it would be hereafter, whatever you think. However, this ſhould ſatisfy you, that God's time is the beſt time.

*Plea* 4. O but I have loſt all in one, it is my only one, I have none left in its room to repair the breach, and make up the loſs: If God had given me other children to take comfort in, the loſs had not been ſo great; but to loſe all at one ſtroke is inſupportable.

*Anſwer* 1. Religion allows not unto Chriſtians a liberty of expreſſing the death of their dear relations by ſo hard a word as the loſs of them is; they are not loſt, but ſent before you*: And it is a ſhameful thing for a Chriſtian to be reproved for ſuch an uncomely expreſſion by a heathen; it is enough to make us bluſh to read what an heathen ſaid in this caſe†, 'Never ſay thou haſt loſt any thing '(ſaith Epictetus) but that it is returned.' Is thy ſon dead? He is 'only reſtored. Is thy inheritance taken from thee? It is alſo re-'turned.' And a while after he adds, Ει τυτο θεοις φιλον τυτο γινεσθω, i. e. 'Let every thing be as the gods would have it.'

*Anſwer* 2. It is no fit expreſſion to ſay you have loſt all in one, except that one be Chriſt; and he being once yours, can never be loſt. Doubtleſs, your meaning is, you have loſt all your comfort of that kind; and what though you have? Are there not multitudes of comforts yet remaining, of a higher kind, and more precious and durable nature? If you have no more of that ſort, yet ſo long as you have better, what cauſe have you to rejoice!

*Anſwer* 3. You too much imitate the way of the world in this complaint; they know not how to repair the loſs of one comfort but by another of the ſame nature, which muſt be put in its room to fill up the vacancy: But have you no other way to ſupply your loſs? Have you not a God to fill the place of any creature that leaves you? Surely this would better become a man whoſe portion is in this life, than one that profeſſes God is his all in all.

*Plea* 5. O but my only one is not only taken away, but there remains no expectation or probability of any more: I muſt now look upon myſelf as a dry tree, never to take comfort in children any more, which is a cutting thought.

*Anſwer* 1. Suppoſe what you ſay, that you have no hope nor expectation of another child remaining to you; yet if you have a hope of better things than children, you have no reaſon to be caſt down: Bleſs God for higher and better hopes than theſe. In Iſa. lvi. 4, 5. the Lord comforts them that have no expectations of ſons or daughters with this; "That he will give unto them in his houſe, and with-

* *Non amittuntur ſed præmittuntur.* † *Epict. Enchirid.* cap. 15.

" in his walls, a place and a name better than of ſons and daughters; " even an everlaſting name that ſhall not be cut off." There are better mercies, and higher hopes than theſe; though your hopes of children, or from children, ſhould be cut off, yet if your eternal hopes are ſecure, and ſuch as ſhall not make you aſhamed, you ſhould not be ſo caſt down.

*Anſwer* 2. If God will not have your comforts to lie any more in children, then reſolve to place them in himſelf, and you ſhall never find cauſe to complain of loſs by ſuch an exchange: You will find that in God which is not to be had in the creature; one hour's communion with him, ſhall give you that which the happieſt parent never yet had from his children; you will exchange braſs for gold, periſhing vanity for ſolid and abiding excellency.

*Plea* 6. But the ſuddenneſs of the ſtroke is amazing, God gave little or no warning to prepare for this trial: Death executed its commiſſion as ſoon as it opened it. My dear huſband, wife, or child, was ſnatched unexpectedly out of my arms, by a ſurprizing ſtroke; and this makes my ſtroke heavier than my complaint.

*Anſwer* 1. That the death of your relation was ſo ſudden and ſurprizing, was much your own fault, who ought to have lived in the daily ſenſe of its vanity, and expectation of your ſeparation from it; you knew it to be a dying comfort in its beſt eſtate, and it is no ſuch wonderful thing to ſee that dead, which you knew before to be dying: Beſides, you heard the changes ringing about you in other families; you frequently ſaw other parents, huſbands, and wives, carrying forth their dead; and what were all theſe but warnings given to you to prepare for the like trials?

Surely, then, it was your own ſecurity and regardleſsneſs that made this affliction ſo ſurprizing to you; and who is to be blamed for that, you know.

*Anſwer* 2. There is much difference betwixt the ſudden death of infants, and that of grown perſons; the latter may have much work to do; many ſins actually to repent of, and many evidences of their intereſt in Chriſt to examine and clear, in order to their more comfortable death; and ſo ſudden death may be deprecated by them.

But the caſe of infants, who exerciſe not their reaſon, is far different; they have no ſuch work to do, but are purely paſſive: All that is done in order to their ſalvation, is done by God immediately upon them, ſo it comes all to one, whether their death be more quick, or more ſlow.

*Anſwer* 3. You complain of the ſuddenneſs of the ſtroke: but another will be ready to ſay, had my friend died in that manner, my affliction had been nothing to what now it is; I have ſeen many deaths contrived into one; I ſaw the gradual approaches of it upon my dear relation, who felt every thread of death as it came on toward him, who often cried with Job, chap. iii. ver. 21, 22. " Where- " fore is light given to him that is in miſery, and life to the bitter in

" ſoul? Which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it " more than for hid treaſures: Which rejoice exceedingly, and are " glad when they can find the grave."

That which you reckon the ſting of your affliction, others would have reckoned a favour and privilege. How many tender parents, and other relations, who loved their friends as dearly as yourſelves, have been forced to their knees, upon no other errand but this, to beg the Lord to haſten the ſeparation, and put an end to that ſorrow, which to them was much greater than the ſorrow for the dead.

*Plea* 7. You preſs me to moderation of ſorrows, and I know I ought to ſhew it; but you do not know how the caſe ſtands with me, there is a ſting in this affliction, that none feels but myſelf; and, O! how intollerable is it now! I neglected proper means in ſeaſon to preſerve life, or miſcarried in the uſe of means. I now ſee ſuch a neglect, or ſuch a miſtake about the means, as I cannot but judge greatly to contribute to that ſad loſs which I now, too late, lament.

O my negligence, O my raſhneſs, and inconſiderateneſs! how doth my conſcience now ſmite me for my folly! and by this aggravate my burden beyond what is uſually felt by others. Had I ſeaſonably applied myſelf to the uſe of proper means, and kept ſtrictly to ſuch courſes and counſels as thoſe that are able and ſkilful might have preſcribed, I might now have had a living huſband, wife, or child: whereas I am now not only bereaved, but am apt to think I have bereaved myſelf of them. Surely there is no ſorrow like unto my ſorrow.

*Anſwer* 1. Though it be an evil to neglect, and ſlight the means ordained by God for recovery of health, yet it is no leſs evil to aſcribe too much to them, or rely too much on them: the beſt means in the world are weak and ineffectual, without God's aſſiſtance and concurrence, and they never have that his aſſiſtance or concurrence, when his time is come; and that it was fully come in your friend's caſe, is manifeſted now by the event. So that if your friend had had the moſt excellent helps the world affords, they would have availed nothing. This conſideration takes place only in your caſe, who ſee what the will of God is by the iſſue, and may not be pleaded by any whilſt it remains dubious and uncertain, as it generally doth in time of ſickneſs.

*Anſwer* 2. Do you not unjuſtly charge, and blame yourſelves for that which is not really your fault, or neglect! How far you are chargeable in this caſe, will beſt appear by comparing the circumſtances you are now in, with thoſe you were in when your relation was only arreſted by ſickneſs; and it was dubious to you what was your duty, and beſt courſe to take.

Poſſibly you had obſerved ſo many to periſh in phyſicians hands, and ſo many to recover without them, that you judged it ſafer for your friend to be without thoſe means, than to be hazarded by them.

Or, if divers methods and courſes were preſcribed, and perſuaded to, and you now ſee your error, in preferring that which was moſt improper, and neglecting what was more ſafe, and probable: yet as long as it did not ſo appear to your underſtanding at that time, but you followed the beſt light you had to guide you at that time, it were moſt unjuſt to charge the fault upon yourſelves, for chuſing that courſe that then ſeemed beſt to you, whether it were ſo in itſelf, or not.

To be angry with yourſelves for doing, or omitting what was then done, or omitted, according to your beſt diſcretion, and judgment, becauſe you now ſee it by the light of the event, far otherwiſe than you did before; it is to be troubled that you are but men, or that you are not as God, who only can foreſee iſſues and events; and that you acted as all rational creatures are bound to do, according to the light they have, at the time and ſeaſon of action.

*Anſwer* 3. To conclude, Times of great affliction are ordinarily times of great temptation, and it is uſual with Satan then to charge us with more ſins than we are guilty of, and alſo make thoſe things to be ſins, which, upon impartial examination, will not be found to be ſo.

Indeed, had your neglect or miſcarriage been known or voluntary, or had you really preferred a little money (being able to give it) before the life of your relation, and did deliberately chuſe to hazard this, rather than part with that; no doubt, then, but there had been much evil of ſin mixed with your affliction; and your conſcience may juſtly ſmite you for it, as your ſin; but in the other caſe, which is more common, and I preſume yours; it is a falſe charge, and you ought not to abet the deſign of Satan in it.

Judge by the ſorrow you now feel by your friend, in what degree he was dear to you, and what you could now willingly give to ranſom his life, if it could be done with money. Judge, I ſay, by this, how groundleſs the charge is that Satan now draws up againſt you, and you are but too ready to yield to the truth of it.

*Plea* 8. But my troubles are upon a higher ſcore, and account: my child or friend is paſſed into eternity, and I know not how it is with his ſoul: were I ſure my relation were with Chriſt, I ſhould be quiet; but my fears of the contrary are overwhelming; O it is terrible to think of the damnation of one ſo dear to me.

*Anſwer* 1. Admit what the objection ſuppoſes, that you have real grounds to fear the eternal condition of your dear relation; yet it is utterly unbeſeeming you, even in ſuch a caſe as this, to diſpute with, or repine againſt the Lord.

I do confeſs it is a ſore and heavy trial, and that there is no cauſe more ſad, and ſinking to the ſpirit of a gracious perſon: their death is but a trifle to this; but yet if you be ſuch as fear the Lord, methinks his indiſputable ſovereignty over them, and his diſtinguiſhing love and mercy to you, ſhould at leaſt ſilence you in this matter.

*Firſt*, His indiſputable ſovereignty over them, Rom. ix. 20. "Who art thou, O man, who diſputeſt with God?" He ſpeaks in the matters of eternal election and reprobation. What if the Lord will not be gracious to thoſe that are ſo dear to us? Is there any wrong done to them or us thereby? Aaron's two ſons were cut off in the act of ſin, by the Lord's immediate hand, and yet he held his peace, Lev. x. 3. God told Abraham plainly, that the covenant ſhould not be eſtabliſhed with Iſhmael, for whom he ſo earneſtly prayed, *O let Iſhmael live before thee!* and he knew that there was no ſalvation out of the covenant, and yet he ſits down ſilent under the word of the Lord.

*Secondly*, But if this do not quiet you, yet methinks his diſtinguiſhing love and mercy to you ſhould do it. O what do you owe to God, that root and branch hath not been caſt together into the fire! that the Lord hath given you good hope, through grace that it ſhall be well with you for ever. Let this ſtop your mouth, and quiet your ſpirit, though you would have grounds for this fear.

*Anſwer* 2. But pray examine the grounds of your fear, whether it may not proceed from the ſtrength of your affections to the eternal welfare of your friend, or from the ſubtilty of Satan, deſigning hereby to overwhelm and ſwallow you up in ſuppoſed, as well as from juſt grounds and cauſes? In two caſes it is very probable your fear may proceed only from your own affection, or Satan's temptation.

*Firſt*, If your relation died young, before it did any thing to deſtroy your hopes. Or,

*Secondly*, If grown, and in ſome good degree hopeful; only he did not in life, or at death, manifeſt, and give evidence of grace, with that clearneſs as you deſired.

As to the caſe of infants in general, it is none of our concern to judge their condition; and as for thoſe that ſprang from covenanted parents, it becomes us to exerciſe charity towards them; the ſcripture ſpeaks very favourably of them.

And as for the more adult, who have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, and made conſcience of ſin and duty, albeit they never manifeſted what you could deſire they had; yet in them, as in young Abijah, "may be found ſome good things towards the Lord," which you never took notice of. Reverence of your authority, baſhfulneſs, and ſhame-facedneſs, reſervedneſs of diſpoſition, and many other things, may hide thoſe ſmall and weak beginnings of grace that are in children, from the obſervations of the parents. God might ſee that in them that you never ſaw; he deſpiſeth not the day of ſmall things.

However it be, it is now out of your reach; your concernment rather is to improve the affliction to your own good, than judge and determine their condition, which belongs not to you but to God.

*Plea* 9. O but I have ſinned in this relation, and God hath puniſhed my ſin in diſſolving it. O ſaith one, my heart was ſet too

much upon it, I even idolized it, that was my ſin: and, ſaith another, I wanted due affections, and did not love my relation, at leaſt not ſo ſpiritually as I ought; that was my ſin. Now God is viſiting me for all the neglects and defects that hath been in me towards my relation.

*Anſwer* 1. There is no man ſo thoroughly ſanctified, as not to fail, and come ſhort in many things pertaining to his relative duties: and to ſpeak, as the thing is, the corruptions of the holieſt perſons are as much diſcovered in this, as any other thing whatſoever; and it is a very common thing for conſcience, not only to charge theſe failures upon us, but to aggravate them to the utmoſt when God hath made the ſeparation. So that this is no more than what is uſual, and very common, with perſons in your caſe.

*Anſwer* 2. Admit that which the objection ſuppoſes, that God had afflicted you for your ſin, and removed that comfort from you, which you idolized, and too much doted on; yet there is no reaſon you ſhould be ſo caſt down under your affliction: For all this may be, and probably is the fruit of his love to, and care of your ſoul, Rev. iii. 19. He tells the afflicted, for their comfort, "Whom I love, I rebuke and chaſten." How much better is it to have an idolized enjoyment taken from you, in mercy, than if God ſhould ſay concerning you, as he did of Ephraim, Hoſea iv. 17. "He is joined to "idols, let him alone."

O it is better for you that your Father now reckons with you for your follies with the rod in his hand, than to ſay as he doth to ſome, let them go on, I will not hinder them in, or rebuke them for their ſinful courſes; but will reckon with them for all together in hell at laſt.

*Anſwer* 3. And as to what you now charge upon yourſelf, that the neglect of duty did ſpring from the want of love to your relation; your ſorrow at parting may evidence that your relation was rooted deep in your affection; but if your love was not ſo ſpiritual and pure, to love and enjoy them in God; that was undoubtedly your ſin, and is the ſin of moſt Chriſtians, for which both you, and all others, ought to be humbled.

*Plea* 10. God hath bleſſed me with an eſtate, and outward comforts in the world, which I reckoned to have left to my poſterity; and now I have none to leave it with, nor have I any comfort to think of it; the purpoſes of my heart are broken off, and the comfort of all my other enjoyments blaſted by this ſtroke in an hour. How are the pains and cares of many years periſhed.

*Anſwer* 1. How many are there in the world, yea, of our own acquaintance, whom God hath either denied, or deprived both of the comforts of children and eſtates too? If he have left you thoſe outward comforts, you ought to acknowledge his goodneſs therein, and not to ſlight theſe becauſe he hath deprived you of the other.

*Anſwer* 2. Though your children are gone, yet God hath many

children left in the world, whoſe bowels you may refreſh with what he hath beſtowed upon you; and your charity to them will doubtleſs turn to a more conſiderable account, than if you had left a large eſtate to your own poſterity.

Surely we are not ſent into this world to heap up great eſtates for our children: and if you have been too eager in this deſign, you may now read God's juſt rebuke of your folly. Bleſs God you have yet an opportunity to ſerve him eminently by your charity, and God deny you other executors, let your own hands be your executors, to diſtribute to the neceſſity of the ſaints, that the bleſſings of them that are ready to periſh may come upon you.

*Plea* 11. O but the remembrance of its witty words and pretty actions, is wounding.

*Anſwer* 1. Let it rather lift up your hearts to God in praiſe that gave you ſo deſirable a child, than fill your heart with diſcontent at his hand in removing it. How many parents are there in the world whoſe children God hath deprived of reaſon and underſtanding, ſo that they only differ from the beaſts in external ſhape and figure? And how many ſhew betimes ſo perverſe a temper, that little comfort can be expected from them.

*Anſwer* 2. Theſe are but ſmall circumſtances, and trivial things in themſelves; but by theſe little things Satan manages a great deſign againſt your ſoul, to deject or exaſperate it: And ſurely this is not your buſineſs at this time; you have greater things than the words and actions of children to mind; to ſearch out God's ends in the affliction, to mortify the corruption it is ſent to rebuke, to quiet your hearts in the will of God; this is your work.

*Plea* 12. *Laſtly*, It is objected, O but God hides his face from me in my affliction; it is dark within, as well as without, and this makes my caſe more deplorable, greatly afflicted, and ſadly deſerted.

*Anſwer* 1. Though you want at preſent ſenſible comfort, yet you have reaſon to be thankful for gracious ſupports. Though the light of God's countenance ſhine not upon you, yet you find the everlaſting arms are underneath you; the care of God worketh for you, when the conſolations of God are withdrawn from you.

*Anſwer* 2. To have God hide his face in the time of trouble, is no new or unuſual thing; God's deareſt ſaints, yea, his own Son, hath experienced it, who in the deeps of inward and outward trouble, when wave called unto wave, felt not thoſe ſweet, ſenſible influences of comfort from God, which had always filled his ſoul formerly. If Chriſt cry in extremity, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken "me!" Then ſure we need not wonder, as if ſome ſtrange thing had happened to us.

*Anſwer* 3. May not your ſubmiſſive carriage under the rod provoke God to hide his face from you. Pray conſider it well, nothing is more probable than for this to be the cauſe of God's withdrawment from you. Could you, in meekneſs and quietneſs, receive that cup

your Father hath given you to drink: accept the puniſhment of your iniquities; ſay, Good is the word of the Lord, It is the Lord, let him do what he will: You would ſoon find the caſe altered with you; but the comforting ſpirit finds no delight, or reſt, in a turbulent and tumultuous breaſt.

And thus I have ſatisfied the moſt conſiderable pleas urged, in juſtification of our exceſſes.

4. I come now to the laſt thing propoſed, namely, the means of curing and preventing theſe ſinful exceſſes of ſorrow for the death of our dear relations.

And, although much hath been ſaid already to diſſuade from this evil, and I have enlarged already much beyond my firſt intention; yet I ſhall caſt in ſome farther help and aſſiſtance towards the healing of this diſtemper, by preſcribing the following rules:

Rule 1. *If you would not mourn exceſſively for the loſs of creature-comforts, then beware that you ſet not your delight and love exceſſively, or inordinately upon them, whilſt you do enjoy them.*

Strong affections make ſtrong afflictions; the higher the tide the lower the ebb. According to the meaſure of our delight in the enjoyment, is our grief in the loſs of theſe things. The apoſtle knits theſe two graces, temperance and patience, together in the precept, 2 Pet. i. 16. and it is very obſervable how intemperance and impatience are inſeparably linked in experience, yea, the experience of the beſt men. You read, Gen. xxxvii. 3. "Now Iſrael loved "Joſeph more than all his children, becauſe he was the ſon of his "old age; and made him a coat of many colours."

This was the darling; Jacob's heart was ſo exceedingly ſet upon him, his very life was bound up in the life of the lad. Now when the ſuppoſed death of his child was brought to him, how did he carry it? See ver. 34, 35. "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put ſack-"cloth upon his loins; and mourned for his ſon many days: And "all his ſons, and all his daughters, roſe up to comfort him, but he "refuſed to be comforted. And he ſaid, for I will go down into the "grave to my ſon mourning. Thus his father wept for him."

Here, as in a glaſs, are the effects of exceſſive love to a child repreſented: Here you may ſee what work immoderate love will make, even in a ſanctified heart.

O therefore let your moderation be known to all men, in your delight and ſorrows about earthly things; for ordinarily the proportion of the one is anſwerable to the other.

Rule 2. *If you would not be overwhelmed with grief for the loſs of your relations, be exact and careful in diſcharging your duties to them while you have them.*

The teſtimony of your conſcience, that you have laboured in all things to diſcharge the duties you owed to your relations whilſt they were with you, will prove an excellent allay to your ſorrows for them when they are no longer yours. It is not ſo much the ſingle

affliction, as the guilt charged upon us in times of affliction, that makes our load ſo heavy.

O what a terrible thing is it to look upon our dead friends, whilſt conſcience is accuſing and upbraiding us for our duties neglected, and ſuch or ſuch ſins committed? O you little think how dreadful a ſpectacle this will make the dead body of thy friend to thee!

Conſcience, if not quite ſtupid or dead, will ſpeak at ſuch a time. O therefore, as ever you would provide for a comfortable parting at death, or meet again at judgment; be exact, punctual, and circumſpect, in all your relative duties.

Rule 3. *If you would not be overwhelmed by trouble for the loſs of dear relations, then turn to God under your trouble, and pour out your ſorrows, by prayer, into his boſom.*

This will eaſe and allay your troubles. Bleſſed be God for the ordinance of prayer; how much are all the ſaints beholden to it, at all times, but eſpecially in heart-ſinking and diſtreſsful times? It is ſome relief, when in diſtreſs, we can pour out our trouble into the boſom of a wife, or faithful friend; how much more when we leave our complaint before the gracious, wiſe, and faithful God? I told you before of that holy man, who having loſt his dear and only ſon, got to his cloſet, there poured out his ſoul freely to the Lord, and when he came down to his friends that were waiting below to comfort him, and fearing how he would bear that ſtroke, he came from his duty with a cheerful countenance, telling them he would be content to bury a ſon, if it were poſſible, every day, provided he might enjoy ſuch comfort as his ſoul had found in that private hour.

Go thy way, Chriſtian, to thy God, get thee to thy knees in the cloudy and dark day; retire from all creatures, that thou mayeſt have thy full liberty with thy God, and there pour out thy heart before him, in free, full, and broken-hearted confeſſions of ſin: Judge thyſelf worthy of hell, as well as of this trouble; juſtify God in all his ſmarteſt ſtrokes; beg him, in this diſtreſs, to put under the everlaſting arms; intreat one ſmile, one gracious look, to enlighten thy darkneſs, and cheer thy drooping ſpirit. Say with the prophet, Jer. xvii. 17. "Be thou not a terror to me; thou art my hope in the day "of evil." And try what relief ſuch a courſe will afford thee. Surely, if thy heart be ſincere in this courſe, thou ſhalt be able to ſay with that holy man, Pſalm xciv. 29. "In the multitude of my thoughts "which I had within me, thy comforts have delighted my ſoul."

Rule 4. *If you would bear the loſs of your dear relations with moderation, eye God in the whole proceſs of the affliction more, and ſecondary cauſes and circumſtances of the matter leſs.*

"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it," Pſal. xxxix 9. Conſider the hand of the Lord in the whole matter: And that,

*Firſt*, As a ſovereign hand, which hath right to diſpoſe of thee, and all thy comforts, without thy leave or conſent, Job xxxiii. 13.

*Secondly*, As a father's hand correcting thee in love and faithfulneſs. Prov. iii. 11. "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, as a "father the ſon in whom he delighteth." O if once you could but ſee affliction as a rod in a father's hand, proceeding from his love, and intended for your eternal good; how quiet would you then be?

And ſurely if it draws your heart nearer to God, and mortifies it more to this vain world, it is a rod in the hand of ſpecial love: If it end in your love to God, doubt not but it comes from God's love to you.

*Thirdly*, As a juſt and righteous hand. Haſt not thou procured this to thyſelf by thy own folly? Yea, the Lord is juſt in all that is come upon thee; whatever he hath done, yet he hath done thee no wrong.

*Fourthly*, Laſtly, As a moderate and merciful hand that hath puniſhed thee leſs than thine iniquities deſerve: He that hath caſt thee into affliction, might juſtly have caſt thee into hell. It is of the Lord's mercy that thou art not conſumed. Why doth the living man complain?

Rule 5. *If you will bear your affliction with moderation, compare it with the afflictions of other men, and that will greatly quiet your ſpirits.*

You have no cauſe to ſay God hath dealt bitterly with you, and that there is no ſorrow like your ſorrow: Look round about you, and impartially conſider the condition that others are in; and they nothing inferior to you in any reſpect. You had one dear child; Aaron had two at a ſtroke, Job all at one ſtroke; and both theſe by an immediate ſtroke from the hand of God. Some godly parents have lived to ſee their children die in their ſin by the hand of juſtice, others have ſeen them live to the diſhonour of God, and breaking of their own ſpirits, and would have eſteemed it a mercy if they had died from the womb, and given up the ghoſt when they came out of the belly, as Job ſpeaks.

In what miſery have ſome parents ſeen their children die! God holding them as ſo many terrible ſpectacles of miſery before their eyes; ſo that they begged the Lord, with importunity, to let looſe his hands, and cut them off; death being in their eſteem, nothing to thoſe continual agonies in which they have ſeen them lie weltering from day to day. O you little know what a bitter cup others have given them to drink? Surely, if you compare, you muſt ſay, the Lord hath dealt gently and graciouſly with me.

Rule 6. *Carefully ſhun and avoid whatſoever may renew your ſorrow, or provoke you to impatience.*

Increaſe not your ſorrow by the ſight of, or diſcourſes about ſad objects; and labour to avoid them, as occaſions preſented by the enemy of your ſouls, to draw forth the corruptions of your heart.

I told you before why Jacob would not have the child of which Rachel died, called after the name his wife had given, Benoni, the ſon of my ſorrow; leſt it ſhould prove a daily occaſion of renewing

his trouble for the loſs of his dear wife; but he called his name Benjamin.

Your impatience is like tinder, or gun-powder, ſo long as you can prevent the ſparks from falling on it, there is no great danger; but you that carry ſuch dangerous prepared matter in your own hearts, cannot be too careful to prevent them. Do by murmuring, as you do by blaſphemous thoughts; think quite another way, and give no occaſion.

Rule 7. *In the day of your murmuring for the death of your friends, ſeriouſly conſider your own death as approaching, and that you and your dead friend are diſtinguiſhed by a ſmall interval and point of time.* 2 Sam. xi. 13. *I ſhall go to him.* Surely the thoughts of your own death, as approaching alſo, will greatly allay your ſorrows for the dead that are gone before you.

We are apt to fancy a long life in the world, and then the loſs of thoſe comforts which we promiſed ourſelves ſo much of the ſweetneſs and comforts of our lives from, ſeems an intolerable thing.

But would you realize your own deaths more, you would not be ſo deeply concerned for their deaths as you are. Could you but look into your own graves more ſeriouſly, you would be able to look into your friend's grave more compoſedly.

And thus I have finiſhed what I deſigned from this ſcripture. The Father of mercies, and God of all comforts, whoſe ſole prerogative it is to comfort them that are caſt down, write all his truths upon your hearts, that they may abide there, and reduce your diſordered affections to that frame which beſt ſuits the will of God, and the profeſſion you make of ſubjection and reſignation thereunto.